BICYCLING AUSTRALIA

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PEAK ROAD PERFORMANCE

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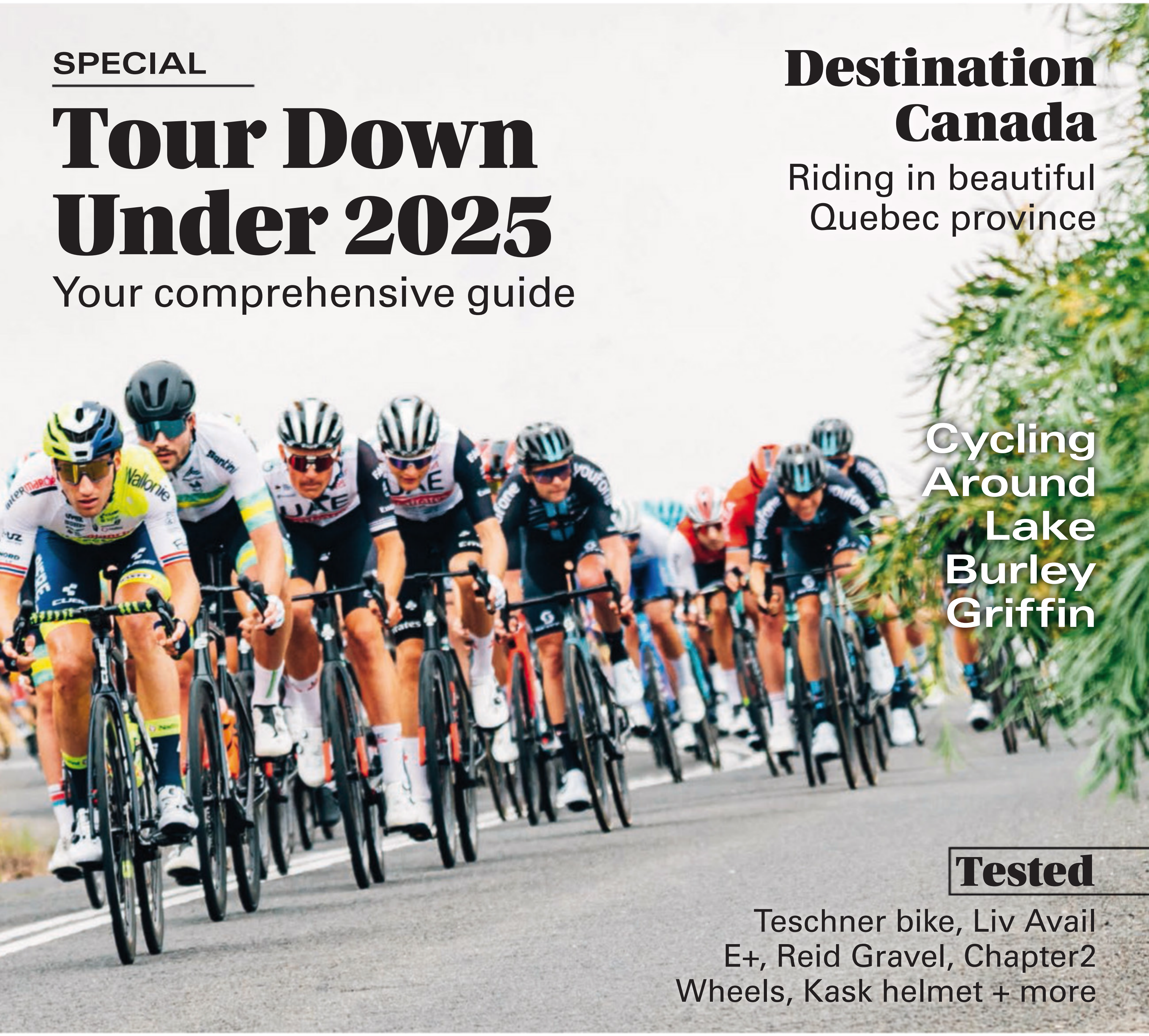

SPECIAL

Tour Down Under 2025

Your comprehensive guide

Destination Canada

Riding in beautiful Quebec province

Cycling Around Lake Burley Griffin

Tested

Teschner bike, Liv Avail E+, Reid Gravel, Chapter2 Wheels, Kask helmet + more

Custom Saddles

A look inside the Fizik factory in Italy

Low Tech Training

Do you need tech to get real results?

Anthony Tan's Spin Cycle

Is Pogacar good value at €6 million?

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New Beginnings

"The visionary starts with a clean sheet of paper and reimagines the world." – Malcolm Gladwell.
Peter Maniaty welcomes the fresh start.

The start of a new year; there's always something special about it. New season. New faces. New ambitions. But this new year, well, you can make a fair argument it's just that little bit more special than usual. For 2025 holds some rather important 'new' things for Australian cycling.

The first happens right up front, starting from January 8, when the National Road Championships head west, more than 3,000 kilometres from their former home in Ballarat, to a dynamic new circuit centred around inner-city Kings Park in Perth. Elite-level road racing in the heart of an Australian capital city? That's new alright and super exciting. Even better, with no precedents we have little idea how the racing will unfold on an entirely untested course. After two decades doing laps of Mount Buninyong, that's new too.

National Champions duly crowned, it's then time for something else very new and, arguably, even more important for the future of Australian road cycling. Taking the place of the ill-fated National Road Series, the inaugural ProVelo Super League kicks off in Adelaide on 18 January – strategically smack bang in the middle of the Santos Tour Down Under – ushering in a new dawn on the elite domestic scene. Yes, there are familiar races on the schedule. But with change desperately needed there are also new events, with new formats, including the three-stage Harbour City GP which will return top-level racing to Sydney for the first time in, well, a long time. Much is hinging on its success, both in the short and long term – not least for the Under 23 winners who will secure stagiaire contracts on the UCI WorldTour. Hopefully, plenty of new sponsors will also duly follow, sharing more of the load that continues to be shouldered by everyone's favourite caravan king, Gerry Ryan.

What's new in 2025? Plenty. Bring it on.

Our Contributors

Peter Maniaty Peter is Bicycling Australia's senior journalist, and highly respected in the world of cycling. From bike reviews, to destination features and nitty gritty opinion pieces, he's a gun writer.

Anthony Tan One of our longest-serving columnists, 'TanMan' has a deep passion for the sport and is a natural communicator.

Lee 'Hollywood' Turner 'Hollywood' is one of Australia's best known and most colourful cyclists. Lee Turner always rides hard, speaks his mind and tells it as it is.

Amy McPherson A London-based Aussie, Amy is a keen cyclist and runner. A highly-respected travel writer, she specialises in active travel in France and Italy.

Steve Thomas Steve is a veteran cycling journalist and skilled photographer. He has contributed to numerous publications worldwide, including Bicycling Australia, for over 30 years!

Luke Meers Wollongong-based writer Luke is a strong and competitive bike rider. He writes regular tech and gear reviews for Bicycling Australia and isn't afraid to get his hands dirty.

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46 FIZIK CUSTOM SADDLE

BA visited the fizik HQ in Italy and learnt about their 3D custom saddle design and manufacturing. Called 'One-on-One', fizik's proprietary pressure mapping design and fitting system takes customisation to the next level.

ON THE COVER: Tour Down Under action, Supplied by SA Tourism Commission

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The start of something

As an obsessed road cyclist of some 16 years, I was honoured to be anointed the new editor of *Bicycling Australia* magazine a few months back. The role perfectly matches my professional experience as a writer and my love of cycling, and I couldn't be happier.

I could never have imagined that, when I was an undergraduate studying communication in Bathurst all those years ago, I would one day be an editor of a prestigious cycling publication. My late dad, Dennis, began his career as a journalist for a long-defunct newspaper in Melbourne called The Argus, and I feel like I've done a full circle on his behalf. I know he'd be very proud of me.

I'd also like to pay tribute to my predecessor, Nat Bromhead, who employed me as a contributor to this great publication for many years, making the transition to the editor all the more easy.

Inside this issue

As a long-time fan and attendee of Australia's premier road race, the Tour Down Under, we're pleased to present a comprehensive guide to the 25th edition of the event. Our correspondent, Peter Maniaty, brings us a preview of the race and outlines each stage of the women's and men's races.

If you're keen on bike travel, you'll enjoy our story from Amy McPherson about the delights of riding in Quebec, Canada. Closer to home, Mick Fletoridis shares the joys of his weekly bike ride with a group of mates around Canberra's iconic Lake Burley Griffin.

Plus, there are our usual bike and gear round-ups. I was lucky enough to test out the Liv Avail E+ (pictured above) for this issue. It's a formidable addition to the Liv/Giant range. We also include two more bike reviews, two wheel reviews and more.

As the new person in the chair, I'd love to hear from readers about what you'd like to see in future issues of *Bicycling Australia*. Drop me a line at nicolarutzou@yaffa.com.au.

Nicola Rutzou, Editor

The good always outweighs the bad

Publisher **James Yaffa** reflects on the good in cycling outweighing the bad, even when you have to cancel a huge event.

LAZER
LAZER

We all have bad days, some more than others. None of us escape the ups and downs of life, and some endure more than their fair share of hardships and challenges.

So, when *Bicycling Australia*'s flagship event, now in its 8th year, our Bowral Classic, was left high and dry last month because the Altus traffic management company did not show up, perspective came into play for our team.

We felt gutted for our entire Classics riding community and our loyal commercial partners. We also felt we let down our volunteers, the incredible Southern Highlands community, and our hard-working staff.

Like most of the riders, I had the same question – how could this happen at 5 am on game day with seemingly everything in control? It was simply a case of human error. People make mistakes, some bigger than others, and this one was BIG!

So, with all that chaos and disappointment, two things stood out. My Yaffa Media colleagues and event team are amazing. How they coped with such adversity and confusion was humbling, and I thank you.

Secondly, the Classics' riding community is a compassionate, respectful and resilient group of individuals. They gained much admiration from the Southern Highlands community because many decided to enjoy a day on the bike amidst the negative news. Then, we joined a celebration in the official event village, perhaps our most buzzing village since we started in 2016. It was pumping!

Time allows you to reflect on all these things, and amid the confusion of what went on that morning, it served as a big reminder that nothing in life is guaranteed, and S%#T can happen even with the best plans in place! Many people still had a great day on the bike, which delivered big smiles.

I'd like to thank our readers, the community, and the Classic riders for the encouragement they have given us since that fateful day. We were disappointed and shed some tears, but life is full of disappointments. It's how we react and look to improve that matters, and we are determined to do so!

Have a safe and enjoyable holiday break!

See you on the bike in 2025!

BICYCLING AUSTRALIA

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The Latest Gear

There's always new cycling gear to share – bikes, sunglasses, shoes, and more. Here are some recent releases.

Orbea Avant

The Orbea Avant is a new alloy-framed endurance bike with refined geometry and a "service box" for carrying spares. It also features 35mm tyre clearance and mudguard mounting.

The Spanish brand describes the new Avant as having a balanced geometry, advanced alloy frame and carbon fork to create a comfortable and compliant bike.

Orbea says they have created a bike that makes climbing easier with a steep seat angle and a longer top tube. For improved descending, Orbea has relaxed the fork angle and increased the wheelbase to give more stability at higher speeds, while a size-specific fork trail gives optimum handling no matter the size.

While they are not revealing the new model's weight, Orbea says that by controlling the shapes and wall thicknesses of the aluminium, the bike is lightweight but strong, with enough flex to be comfortable without compromising on pedalling efficiency.

Internal cable routing is standard on all Orbea road bikes, and shifting is optimised for both traditional and electronic shifting systems. The forged bottom bracket allows Orbea to route the cables inside the frame, where they are protected and take the most direct route, reducing friction.

The new Avant includes Orbea's service box, which has space for necessities like tubes, CO2 cartridges, tyre levers, and house keys.

With different handlebar, stem and crank options, the bike can be customised to suit every rider.

More info www.orbea.com

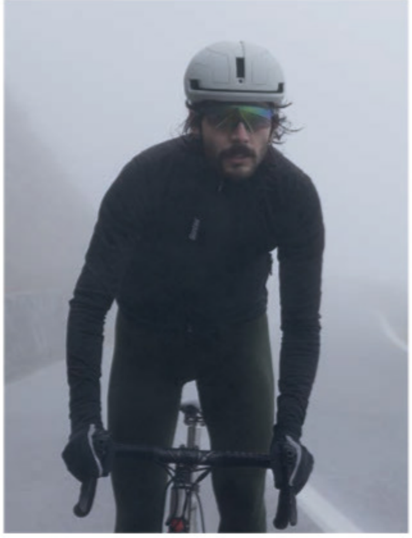
Santini Magic rain jacket

Santini has responded to the market by introducing a non-PFAS rain jacket. PFAS (polyfluorinated alkyl substances) are known to harm our health and the environment, and some waterproof cycling clothing has previously contained them.

Santini's new Magic rain jacket is made with Polartec's Power Shield RPM fabric, a 100 per cent recycled two-layer polyester with a "highly breathable monolithic membrane and a Durable Water Repellent treatment".

Weighing just 150 grams, it's easy to stash in your back pocket and has a high degree of stretch. It's initially available in black only with a reflective logo on the rear, but Santini says it will be releasing three different colour options next year, as well as a vest.

More info www.santinisms.com.au



Fast Legs

Fast Legs is a new range of Australian-made skincare products designed to protect and care for sportspeople's skin before and during sport and repair it afterwards.

The brainchild of Melbourne couple, Katie Whiffen and Campbell Fuller, the range aims to prevent and repair skin irritation, saddle sores, runner's rash & chafing and to renew sun and wind-exposed faces and bodies.

All products are Australian-made, free of parabens & sulphates and tested on active people.

The range includes anti-chafing cream, body wash, face clean, recovery face gel, eye cream, SPF15 moisturiser, and sunscreens.

More info www.fastlegs.cc

FAST LEGS
FACE CLEAN
FAST LEGS
ANTI-CHAFING AND CHAMOIS CREAM
FAST LEGS
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FAST LEGS
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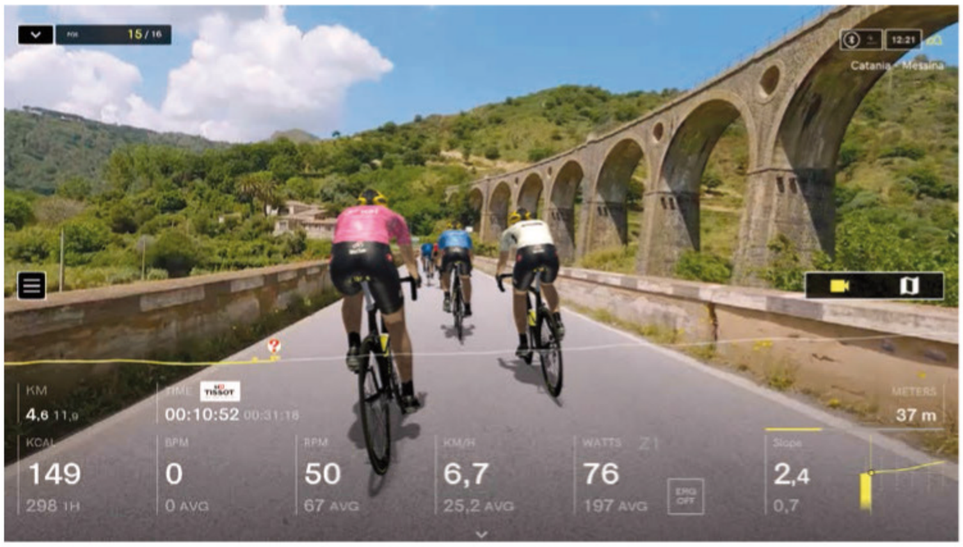
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WATTS
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Slope
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BKool Giro d'Italia Virtual race

If you fancy riding every stage of the 2024 Giro d'Italia, you'll need to subscribe to the Bkool app and jump on your smart trainer.

Dominated by Slovenian superstar Tadej Pogačar, the race featured many notable stages like Stage 6, which took in Tuscany's iconic white gravel roads. There's also the short but hectic Stage 10 that played out beneath the shadow of Mount Vesuvius, and the epic Queen stage that featured 5,500 metres of climbing, including an ascent of the mighty Mortirolo.

RCS Sport and Bkool have teamed up to present the 2024 Giro d'Italia Virtual. Bkool says they have accurately portrayed the Italian landscape, and Bkool describes its app as having "immersive simulation technology".

But you can't ride them all yet; the Giro d'Italia Virtual will release a new stage every 15 days until May 2025.

More info www.girovirtual.com

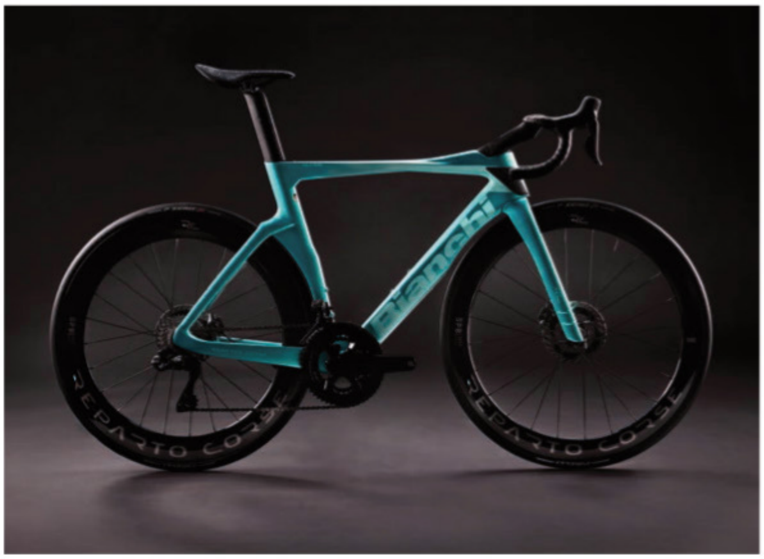
Bianchi's new Oltre colourways

For many traditionalists, Bianchi bikes only come in one colour – the iconic Celeste.

But Bianchi has other ideas and is banking on its fans being happy to break with tradition and ride its Oltre race bike in many colours other than the standard Celeste – although it's still on offer, too.

The top-of-the-range Oltre RC is now offered in a black carbon finish (with Celeste details) and a metallic Celeste (pictured). The Pro, Comp, and Race models also offer this interpretation of the classic colourway, but come with other options, including a blue-grey and a colour that Bianchi describes as 'pearlised iridescence' that combines violet, green, and silver.

More info www.bianchi.com


Bianchi
REPARTO CORSE
REPARTO CORSE

Pinarello DOGMA X new colourways

Pinarello has launched three new colourways across its endurance road bike – DOGMA X. Now available in Xolar White, Xolar Yellow and Xolar Sea (pictured), these striking bikes add to the range, expanding the original colour offering that includes Xolar Black and Xolar Green, first introduced at the bike's launch in September 2023.

Known more for their racing bikes, Pinarello's endurance bike has generous tyre clearances of 35mm, endurance geometry, and rear stays that absorb vibrations, making it comfortable without compromising on performance.

Pinarello says that the DOGMA X frame is "asymmetrically designed" to balance the greater torsional forces imparted by the chain, providing riders with a symmetrical ride.

More info www.pinarello.com

BBB Chester Flux glasses

BBB's popular Chester glasses are now available with the new Flux lenses. These new lenses are enhanced with special coatings like anti-scratch, anti-fog, and oleophobic. The lens coating filters light, allowing only the essential wavelengths for optimal contrast to reach your eyes.

The Chester design combines the advantages of both full-frame and frameless glasses. While maintaining a frameless appearance, they conceal an internal frame. BBB says the design achieves the unobstructed view of frameless glasses while ensuring the durability and substantial feel of full-frame options.

The rubber nosepiece guarantees a comfortable, customised fit, while the rubber temple tips enhance stability. The BBB Chester Flux glasses have a RRP of $145.

More info www.bbbcycling.com.au

Northwave Revolution shoes

Northwave describes the new Revolution as a completely renewed model, aiming for a 'pro' look in a comfortable mid-range shoe.

The company's composite carbon sole, 'Morph Carbon,' has a stiffness index of 13 out of 15 and was developed to find the ideal balance between comfort and performance. The sole is designed to follow the anatomical shape of the foot arch to provide support and comfort and includes two air vents to optimise airflow in and out.

The upper of Northwave's Revolution is made of PU synthetic leather with breathable mesh and laser holes. The closures are two dual-rotor dials that are easy to adjust, even while riding.

The new shoes offer greater cleat adjustment possibilities than previous models, and are Speedplay/Wahoo compatible with the Northwave adapter. Plus, the rubber heal pads are replaceable.

Revolution is available in four colour versions: black, white, light grey/sage, and a bolder one with fluoro-red inserts. The new model is also available in a wide version.

More info www.northwave.com

Limited edition MET Helmet

MET describes this limited-edition helmet as a tribute to the golden era of cycling and the spirit of Tadej Pogačar. They chose black as a symbol of elegance and authority and highlighted it with gold veining to celebrate Tadej's successful season.

The carbon shell helmet features the Mips rotational management system, engineered to add protection and save weight. It is also designed to limit the head contact surface to maximise ventilation. Plus, it has 19 vents to improve airflow and comfort and allow Tadej's trademark hair tufts to stick through!

For a comfortable fit, it can be adjusted internally, as well as the lightweight strap to suit individuals.

The same helmet, the Trenta 3K Carbon Mips is also available in other colours, if the limited edition model is not your style.

More info www.met-helmets.com

Ride High Country Gravel Network

The Ride High Country Gravel Network is here and ready to ride, with over 2,000km of gravel roads and 35,000m of climbing through the backroads, country lanes, fire trails, and unsealed roads of Victoria's High Country.

Riders can explore the High Country's many gravel roads with over 50 digitally mapped, tested and comprehensively detailed gravel routes.

From the vineyard-lined gravel of the King Valley to the mountain peaks of Falls Creek and beyond, the Ride High Country Gravel Network criss-crosses the diverse geography with beginner to advanced routes for gravel cyclists of all skill levels.

To celebrate the network's launch, Ride High Country and cycling apparel brand MAAP have collaborated to launch Project 10, the Ride High Country Gravel Network's ten most iconic gravel rides.

More info www.victoriashighcountry.com.au/ride/gravel

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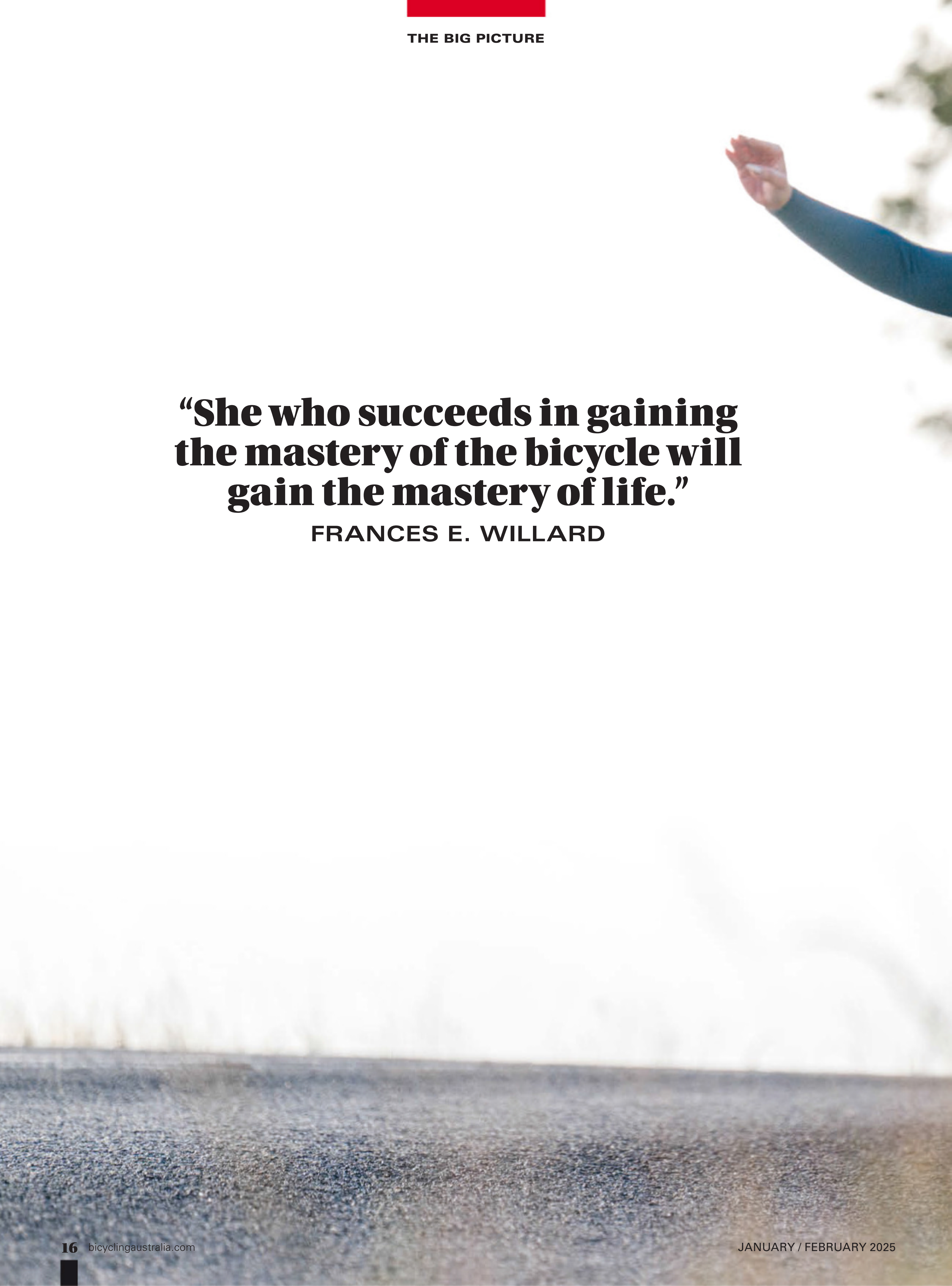

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Women's Stage 3
of the 2024 TDU.

TDU Preview: 25 in '25

Where did that quarter of a century go? Peter Maniaty takes a closer look at the 25th anniversary edition of the Santos Tour Down Under, including a stage-by-stage preview of the men's and women's races.

WORDS: PETER MANIATY

MURRAY BRIDGE
OPENED 1879
CLEARANCE
4.8m
40

ABOVE: The peloton passes through Murray Bridge during the Men's Stage 4 of the 2024 TDU.

OPPOSITE: Sam Welford takes the win on Stage 1 of the 2024 race.

All images supplied by the SA Tourism Commission.

January 1999. John Howard is Prime Minister. Mark Taylor is Test Cricket Captain. The Sydney Olympics are still more than 18 months away and a litre of unleaded petrol costs around 67 cents. Marco Pantani is reigning Tour de France Champion and a brash Texan by the name of Lance Armstrong has only recently returned to the peloton after recovering from testicular cancer. September 11 is just another date on the calendar. Of most relevance here, however, the South Australian government is watching on a little nervously, having made the bold move to replace the Australian Formula One Grand Prix (lost in acrimonious circumstances to Melbourne in 1996) with an all-new international event—a colloquially-named bicycle race called the 'Tour Down Under'.

Fast forward a quarter of a century and history has shown it to be a very shrewd decision indeed. Australia's highest profile international cycling event has evolved into a very different beast, attracting many of the world's best riders each summer along with tens of thousands of fans, whilst injecting millions of dollars into South Australia's visitor economy (more than $87 million in 2024 alone).

Yet for all its growth and changes, there are still plenty of similarities which, in so many ways, gives this race its enduring charm. Not least of these is the centralised Adelaide-based model that has proven outrageously successful with UCI WorldTour teams and riders. The inaugural men's race winner, Stuart O'Grady, is another, now firmly ensconced as overall Race Director alongside Assistant Race Directors, Annette Edmondson and Carlee Taylor.

The January calendar slot also sees the race continue to be the opening salvo of the UCI season. Many of the local towns, climbs and stages have become familiar too – places like Stirling, Cudlee Creek, Lobethal, Hahndorf, Victor Harbor, McLaren Vale, Gorge Road and, of course, Willunga are now household names – it's almost like a homecoming each January. So what does 2025 hold in store?

The Route

Same but different. That's probably the best way to describe the race routes for 2025, as the men's and women's pelotons complete close to 1,400 km of racing across nine stages. It's hard to argue with what Stuart O'Grady is doing. He's resisted the temptation to throw everything completely out the window since assuming the role of Race Director from Mike Turtur in 2021. Rather, the South Australian has been slowly but surely adding his own stamp on the race with a few new ideas each year, far more evolution than revolution.

It's in this spirit the 2025 stages are both a homage to the past and also a harbinger for the future. Many familiar routes, towns and climbs are back, but they've been spiced up with several fascinating new additions. Top of this list for the men's race is the ascent of Knotts Hill on Pound Road near Ashton, an all new climb on Stage 3 with a searing maximum gradient of 22 per cent.

As expected, Willunga Hill retains its traditional Saturday slot, however, thanks to the addition of rarely used Wickhams Hill early on Stage 5, we'll actually see the men's peloton descend Old Willunga Hill Road for the first-ever time, before completing the now traditional two ascents.

In more firsts for 2025, the women's peloton will also tackle Willunga Hill twice—something reigning champion Sarah Gigante, is no doubt already salivating about—whilst an entirely new standalone UCI Pro Series race will take place on Sunday 26 January, the Schwalbe Women's One-Day Classic, featuring the same Adelaide city circuit as Stage 6 of the men's race with 200 UCI Points on offer to the winner.

> "ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF ANY TOUR DOWN UNDER TRIP IS THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE YOUR OWN BIKE AND RIDE DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY."

2024 Recap

Sam Welsford made a storming start to the 2024 season in Adelaide with three wins in the first four stages. A pair of U23s Isaac Del Toro, 20, and Oscar Onley, 21, announced themselves on the international stage with the biggest wins of their young careers. Meanwhile Brit Stephen Williams claimed his first UCI WorldTour GC title, ending the week in ochre.

In the women's race, 19-year old Dutchwoman, Nienke Vinke, emerged as a rider to watch with a fine overall second placing, beaten only by Sarah Gigante who soared to the top of Willunga Hill to claim both Stage 3 honours and overall victory on the final Saturday, capping her return to the pro peloton after several heavily disjointed seasons.

“BASED ON HISTORY, IT’S ALSO A REASONABLY SAFE PREDICTION THAT AUSTRALIAN RIDERS WILL FEATURE STRONGLY AT THE SHARP END OF THE STANDINGS.”

SHARE THE ROAD
300

TOP: Riders in action during Stage 1 of the Women’s TDU 2024.

ABOVE: Fans enjoying the roadside antics on Willunga Hill in 2024.

The Riders

Typically, the start lists in Adelaide comprise of a mix of seasoned veterans, fresh-faced newcomers and riders who, having switched teams in the off-season, are highly motivated to make a great first impression for their new employers and sponsors. At the time of writing, official team lists haven’t been confirmed, but you can bet it will be a similar tale in 2025.

Based on history, it’s also a reasonably safe prediction that Australian riders will feature strongly at the sharp end of the standings. 14 of the 24 men’s editions have been won by Australians, most recently Jay Vine in 2023 and Aussies have only ever missed the men’s podium three times (last year was one of them.) In the women’s, the local domination is even more pronounced with six of the seven editions since 2016 won by Australians, headlined by three-time champion Amanda Spratt.

In the three-stage women’s race, Sarah Gigante will be hoping to repeat her Ochre Jersey performance from 2024. Cecilia Uttrup Ludwig proved the international class of the race in 2024, including a sensational win on Stage 2, so fingers crossed the ever-popular Dane returns. Hopefully more of her European peers will also make the early-season trek to Adelaide – particularly riders from Dutch super team, Team SD Worx-Protime, which has opted not to send a squad to the past two editions.

In the men’s race, Israel-Premier Tech will no doubt be hungry to defend its 2024 crown won by Stephen Williams. Jayco-AlUla will also be keen to re-stamp itself on the race that made it a household name across Australia for the best part of a decade, having not won overall honours since 2019 with the long-since-retired South African Daryl Impey. The Aussie team’s most recent stage winner (Stage 5, 2023) and highest GC finisher in 2024, Simon Yates, may well be back too – but he’ll be riding for Visma-Lease A Bike if he is. After crashing out brutally along Gorge Road in 2024, Luke Plapp may also return, keen to set the record straight.

As always, it will be fascinating to see the make-up of the invitation-only Australian squads. Historically, it’s been a shop window for emerging U23 riders. However, 2024 saw several seasoned pros selected, including Michael Storer, Damien Howson and Sarah Roy.

The Fans

After 25 years, we all know the drill for Adelaide in January. The weather will be hot. The riding will be lumpy. The peloton will be close, as will the koalas. The beers will be cold. The pies will be tasty. The crowds will be rowdy, especially along Old Willunga Hill Road. Need an easy day? Head for the beaches or wineries – or simply crash (figuratively, of course) at the Tour Village opposite the Hilton. Far more than just a sports event, the Tour Down Under is a 10-day celebration on wheels, something every Aussie cycling fan should experience at least once in their life. In 2024, the estimated live audience for the Santos Tour Down Under was 770,600 spectators, and 2025 promises to be bigger still.

One of the best parts of any Tour Down Under trip is the opportunity to take your own bike and ride day after day after day – in between watching the racing itself, of course. From the beaches of Glenelg and the Adelaide Hills to McLaren Vale and Victor Harbour, there's a smorgasbord of options.

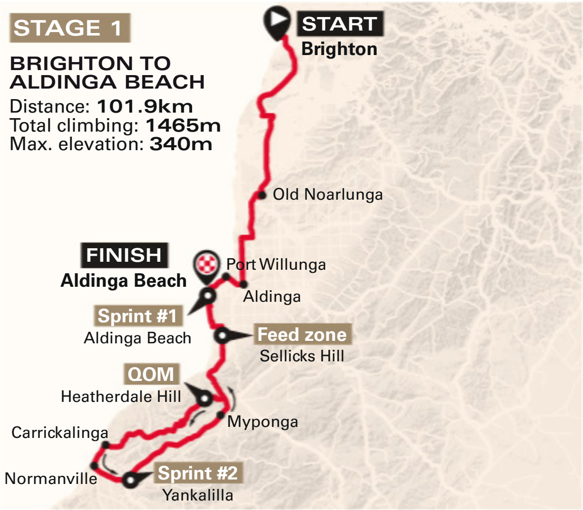
If you're looking for organised rides, RADL GRVL returns for a second year, with a series of activities culminating in the main 120km ride on Friday, 24 January, starting and finishing in McLaren Vale around 40km south of Adelaide.

After a 12-month hiatus, the mass participation ride (previously known as Tour Down Under Challenge Tour) is also back under the new guise of the 'Adelaide Epic Ride', following the same route as Stage 3 of the Men's Race on Thursday, 23 January from Norwood to Uraidla. 120 km, 85 km and 20 km rides are available.

ABOVE: Amanda Spratt signs on for Stage 1 of the Women's TDU 2024.

Women's Stages

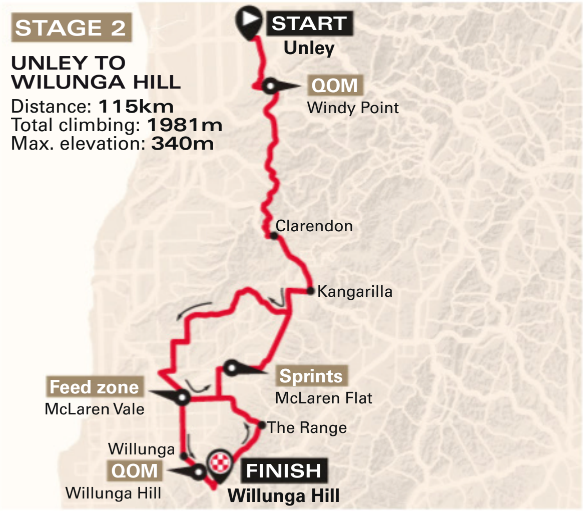
TOTAL DISTANCE: 540KM
TOTAL ASCENT: 5,588M



STAGE 1

BRIGHTON TO ALDINGA BEACH
Distance: **101.9km**
Total climbing: **1465m**
Max. elevation: **340m**

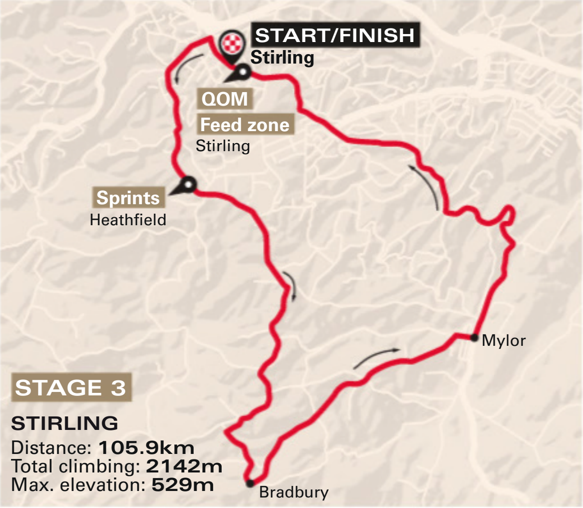
START
Brighton
Old Noarlunga
FINISH
Aldinga Beach
Port Willunga
Aldinga
Sprint #1
Aldinga Beach
Feed zone
Sellicks Hill
QOM
Heatherdale Hill
Myponga
Carrickalinga
Normanville
Sprint #2
Yankalilla



STAGE 2

UNLEY TO WILUNGA HILL
Distance: **115km**
Total climbing: **1981m**
Max. elevation: **340m**

START
Unley
QOM
Windy Point
Clarendon
Kangarilla
Feed zone
McLaren Vale
Sprints
McLaren Flat
The Range
Willunga
QOM
Willunga Hill
FINISH
Willunga Hill



STAGE 3

STIRLING
Distance: **105.9km**
Total climbing: **2142m**
Max. elevation: **529m**

START/FINISH
Stirling
QOM
Feed zone
Stirling
Sprints
Heathfield
Mylor
Bradbury

Women's Stages

FRIDAY, 17 JANUARY

Ziptrak Stage 1 – Brighton to Aldinga, 101.9km

The opening stage of the 2025 women's race has a decidedly coastal theme, starting along the beachfront at Brighton before travelling south to the Fleurieu Peninsula. Noarlunga, Sellicks Beach, Myponga, Yankalilla all feature, before a likely sprint finish at Snapper Point in Aldinga. Whilst much of the stage profile is flat, there's still over 1,400 metres of climbing to be negotiated, most notably the Heatherdale Hill QOM (9.6 km, 3.8 per cent av) which tops out with 50 km to go.

SATURDAY, 18 JANUARY

Health Partners Stage 2 – Unley to Willunga, 115km

An epic Stage 2 starts in Unley just south of the Adelaide CBD, with the climbing beginning pretty much immediately. In fact, the first QOM to Windy Point at Belair (3.8 km, 6% av) happens within the opening 5 km! With senses fully engaged, the peloton then heads south through Clarendon, Kangarilla and McLaren Value en route to its historic double date with Willunga Hill (3 km, 7.4 per cent av). With three QOMs, almost 2,000 metres of elevation and a summit finish, expect aggressive tactics from the overall favourites and big time gaps.

SUNDAY, 19 JANUARY

Hyundai Stage 3 – Stirling to Stirling, 105.9km

It may not feature the standout individual climbs of Stage 2. But the five undulating laps of the Stirling circuit in the Adelaide Hills – offering great vantage points for fans – adds up to more than 2,100 metres of climbing and is sure to test race-weary legs. If the conquerors of Willunga Hill went too deep on Stage 2, a dramatic last-stage lead change could once again be seen as the race crowns its Ochre Jersey winner for 2025.

Men's Stages

SATURDAY, 18 JANUARY

Down Under Classic – Adelaide East End – 55km

In a high-octane tribute to the inaugural Tour Down Under in 1999, the annual men's curtain

BELOW: The women's peloton takes the full width of the road during Stage 2 of the 2024 race.

raiser returns to the East End of Adelaide. The 1.8-kilometre circuit starts and finishes on Rundle Road with the promise of fast and furious racing. Sprinters will be keen to flex their early-season muscles. But as Ecuadorian Jhonatan Narvaez showed from the breakaway in 2024, they don't always get their way. Contenders for the Ochre Jersey when the real racing starts will be simply trying to stay out of trouble.

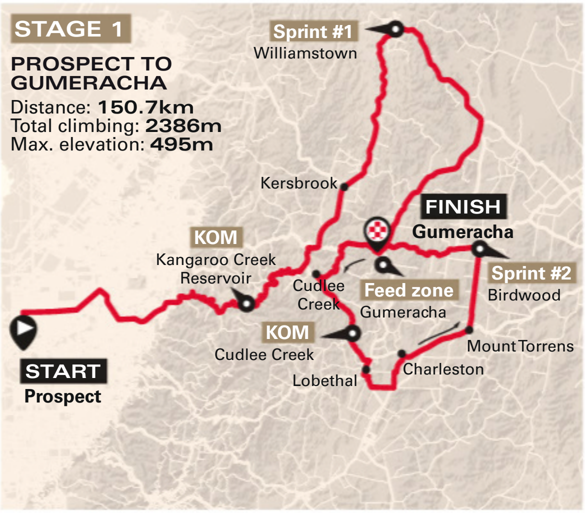
TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY

Ziptrak Stage 1 – Prospect to Gumeracha, 150.7km

Despite close to 2,400 m of climbing, this is almost certainly a stage for the sprinters. Starting in Prospect, the peloton will head north towards Williamstown, tackling the first KOM of 2025 to Kangaroo Creek Reservoir at Paracombe (11.2 km, 5 per cent av) before turning back towards Gumeracha which will host its first-ever men's stage finish. A closing circuit featuring Birdwood, Mount Torrens and Lobethal means the peloton will actually pass through Gumeracha twice before returning for a final surge to the line after 150 km.

Men's Stages

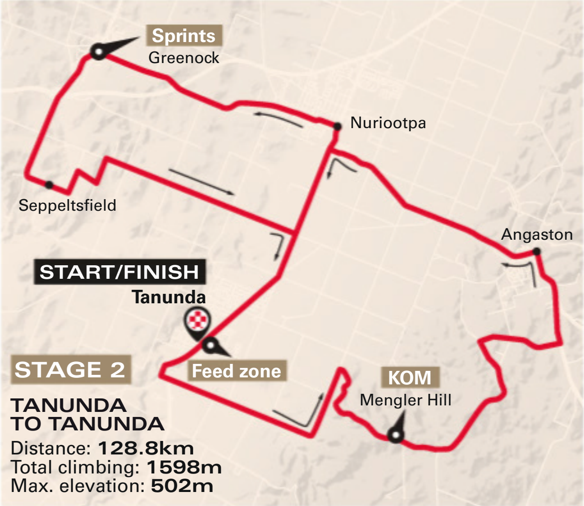
TOTAL DISTANCE: 820KM
TOTAL ASCENT: 13,633M



STAGE 1

PROSPECT TO GUMERACHA
Distance: **150.7km**
Total climbing: **2386m**
Max. elevation: **495m**

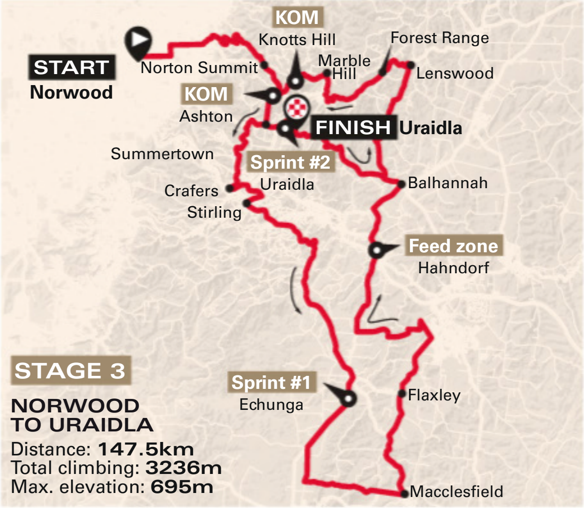
Sprint #1
Williamstown
Kersbrook
FINISH
Gumeracha
KOM
Kangaroo Creek Reservoir
Cudlee Creek
Feed zone
Gumeracha
Sprint #2
Birdwood
KOM
Cudlee Creek
Mount Torrens
Charleston
Lobethal
START
Prospect



STAGE 2

TANUNDA TO TANUNDA
Distance: **128.8km**
Total climbing: **1598m**
Max. elevation: **502m**

Sprints
Greenock
Nuriootpa
Seppeltsfield
Angaston
START/FINISH
Tanunda
Feed zone
KOM
Mengler Hill



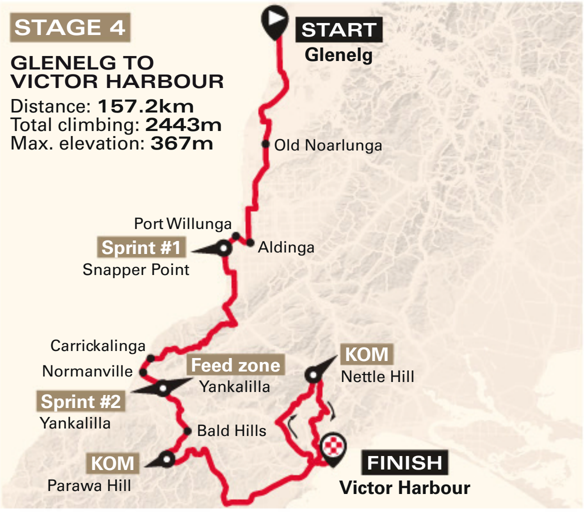
STAGE 3

NORWOOD TO URAIDLA
Distance: **147.5km**
Total climbing: **3236m**
Max. elevation: **695m**

START
Norwood
KOM
Knotts Hill
Forest Range
Norton Summit
Marble Hill
Lenswood
KOM
Ashton
FINISH
Uraidla
Summertown
Sprint #2
Uraidla
Balhannah
Crafers
Stirling
Feed zone
Hahndorf
Sprint #1
Echunga
Flaxley
Macclesfield

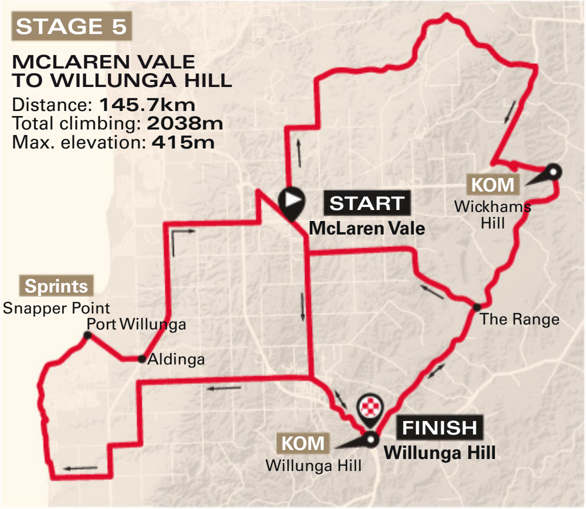
Men's Stages

TOTAL DISTANCE: 820KM
TOTAL ASCENT: 13,633M



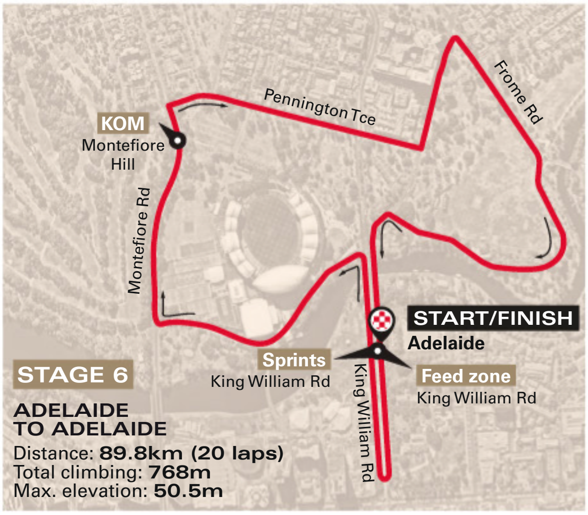
STAGE 4
GLENELG TO VICTOR HARBOUR
Distance: **157.2km**
Total climbing: **2443m**
Max. elevation: **367m**

START
Glenelg
Old Noarlunga
Port Willunga
Sprint #1
Snapper Point
Aldinga
Carrickalinga
Normanville
Feed zone
Yankalilla
Sprint #2
Yankalilla
KOM
Nettle Hill
Bald Hills
KOM
Parawa Hill
FINISH
Victor Harbour



STAGE 5
MCLAREN VALE TO WILLUNGA HILL
Distance: **145.7km**
Total climbing: **2038m**
Max. elevation: **415m**

START
McLaren Vale
KOM
Wickhams Hill
Sprints
Snapper Point
Port Willunga
Aldinga
The Range
KOM
Willunga Hill
FINISH
Willunga Hill



STAGE 6
ADELAIDE TO ADELAIDE
Distance: **89.8km (20 laps)**
Total climbing: **768m**
Max. elevation: **50.5m**

KOM
Montefiore Hill
Pennington Tce
Frome Rd
Montefiore Rd
START/FINISH
Adelaide
Sprints
King William Rd
Feed zone
King William Rd
King William Rd

WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY

Health Partners Stage 2 – Tanunda to Tanunda, 128.8km

Racing moves north-west of Adelaide to the Barossa Valley wine country, with three ascents of Mengler Hill (2.7 km, 6.9 per cent av) approached from the steeper western side. The towns of Angaston, Nuriootpa and Seppeltsfield will all see multiple passes of the peloton, along with Greenock which hosts both of the day's intermediate sprints. Whilst the sprinters may fancy their chances with the fast finish into Tanunda, the lumpy route may have other ideas.

> “MANY FAMILIAR ROUTES, TOWNS AND CLIMBS ARE BACK, BUT THEY'VE BEEN SPICED UP WITH SEVERAL FASCINATING NEW ADDITIONS.”

THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY

efex Stage 3 – Norwood to Uraidla, 147.5km

Stage 3 looms as a brute with more than 3,200 m of climbing packed into less than 150 km. The day has a familiar beginning with suburban Norwood hosting its 17th stage start. The riders push straight up to Norton Summit and the first KOM at Ashton after just 10 km, before heading south through Crafers, Stirling and eventually Macclesfield. The racing then shifts north towards Balhannah where the peloton will enter a finishing circuit that includes two ascents of the brutal new climb of Knotts Hill on Pound Road (2.6 km, 7.5 per cent av, 22.2 per cent max), followed by a short and technical descent to the finish in Uraidla. This one is going to hurt.

FRIDAY, 24 JANUARY

Hahn Stage 4 – Glenelg to Victor Harbor, 157.2km

Glenelg to Victor Harbor is a long-time Tour Down Under staple. Technically, it was last seen in 2020 when Italy's Giacomo Nizzolo prevailed in a bunch sprint. However, a similar course was also used in 2023, beginning in Brighton. Poetically, Glenelg to Victor Harbor also appeared in the race's first-ever edition in 1999, where it was won by current Race Director, Stuart O'Grady. 25 years later there will be no time for nostalgia as riders hurtle south on the year's longest stage. The route sticks to the west coast for the first 68 km, before traversing to the eastern side of the Fleurieu Peninsula via Yankalilla, Bald Hills and the day's first KOM at Parawa Hill (7 per cent av). A second KOM awaits at Nettle Hill (8.1 per cent av) on Hindmarsh Tiers Road with the stage finishing 22 km later on the Esplanade in Victor Harbour.

SATURDAY, 25 JANUARY

THINK! Road Safety Stage 5 – McLaren Vale to Willunga Hill, 145.7km

McLaren Vale. Snapper Point. Aldinga. In many ways, this stage 'is' the Tour Down Under. Yet somewhat surprisingly given its famed twin climbs of Willunga Hill (3 km, 7.4 per cent av), the 2025 route boasts just 2,038 metres of elevation making it one of the week's flatter stages. An interesting addition is the rarely-used KOM at Wickham's Hill (3 km, 6.9 per cent av) which tops out after just 21 km. But what makes this year truly different is the peloton will also descend Old Willunga Hill Road under race conditions for the first time ever. Let's just hope the usually raucous crowds behave and keep well off the road. Whatever happens, with just the Stage 6 city circuit to come, the 2025 Ochre Jersey winner is likely to be decided today.

SUNDAY, 26 JANUARY

Schwalbe Stage 6 – Adelaide to Adelaide, 90km

Fittingly, the Tour Down Under's 25-year anniversary draws to an end on the city streets of Adelaide. Starting and finishing a stone's throw from the River Torrens and Adelaide Oval along King William Road, it's basically the same course that featured between 2015 to 2018, the most recent edition of which was won by fan-favourite Andre Greipel (the final of his record 18 stage wins in the Tour Down Under). Crowds will be large. Conditions will be hot. But riders expecting a ceremonial procession should be warned as it's far from flat. Each lap features the punchy ascent of Montefiore Hill (380 metres, 4.4 per cent av) which, according to the organisers, adds up to 1,932 m elevation—that's only 100 metres less than Stage 5 to Willunga Hill. BA

ELLOWS
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1870

ABOVE: The men in action during Stage 4 of the 2024 TDU.

LEFT: Jhonatan Narváez of Ineos Grenadiers wins the 2024 Down Under Classic.

BELOW: Cecile Uttrup Ludwig of FDJ-SUEZ wins Stage 2 of the 2024 Women's TDU.

The best laid plans...

Running an event like the Bowral Classic takes many months of work. Sometimes, despite all the planning, things go wrong!

WORDS: NICOLA RUTZOU

The highly anticipated Bowral Classic, part of The Classics series presented by this title, was set to take place on Sunday, 20 October 2024. Unfortunately, it was cancelled the morning of the event because the traffic management contractor got the date wrong and did not show up.

While the cancellation disappointed the nearly 3,000 cyclists who had travelled from across the country, many still rode part or all of the course and enjoyed the Event Village afterwards.

This included a special guest appearance by Paris Olympics track cycling gold medallist Conor Leahy.

For the riders who took to the Village, the sentiment was summed up by Julie-Anne Hazlett from the VéloRoo's Cycling Tours, who said: "I still had a fantastic day! Beautiful countryside, lots of smiles, catchups with friends, sunshine and free food and drinks at the end! What's not to love? The atmosphere was great, the Bowral Classic team did a fantastic job at making sure those that were there enjoyed themselves!"

The Bowral Classic team remains committed to returning to the Southern Highlands, with the next edition scheduled for 19 October 2025.

RIGHT: Olympian Conor Leahy at the Event Village.

The Class
owral Class

Jervis Bay Br

The early bird catches the worm

Sign-up now for the annual Mudgee Classic to be held over the weekend of 3 and 4 May 2025 in the stunning NSW Central West, with two great days of riding.

The weekend kicks off with the 55km Dirty Mudgee gravel ride on Saturday, 3 May. This event is perfect for gravel and mountain biking enthusiasts looking to experience Mudgee backcountry's rugged and unsealed roads, offering a unique challenge and true adventure.

The fun continues on Sunday, 4 May, with the Road Cycling Gran Fondo. Catering to all levels of experience, there are four courses to choose from:

- Maxi Classic: 170km endurance ride for seasoned cyclists ready to tackle the rolling hills and expansive vineyards.
- Challenge Classic: 120km ride offering a balance of challenge and enjoyment, ideal for regular riders.
- Rouleurs Classic: 65km course perfect for those seeking a more leisurely yet rewarding experience.
- Social Classic: 35km ride suited for beginners, families, and those wanting to enjoy a relaxed ride through the countryside.

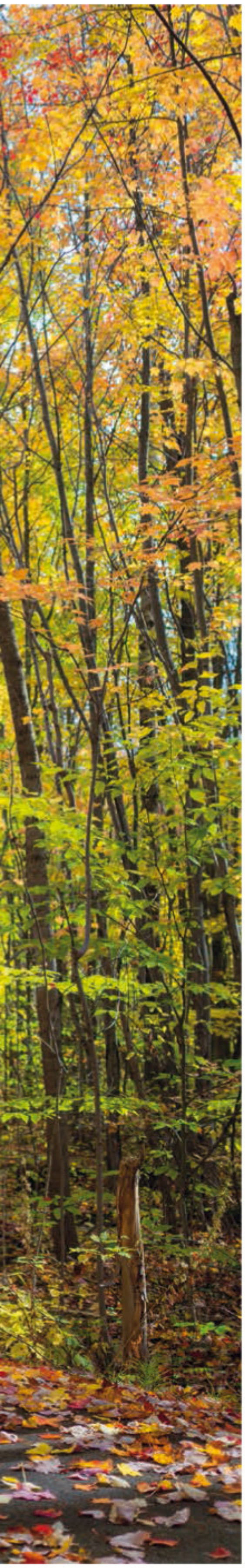
After the event, riders can enjoy the Event Village and celebrate with friends, enjoying food & drinks and visiting exhibitors.

The Mudgee Classic is proudly supported by the NSW Government through its tourism and major events agency, Destination NSW.

Registrations for the 2025 Mudgee Classic are now open. Sign up now and save, and book your accommodation early to avoid disappointment.

Visit www.mudgeeclassic.com.au for course maps and registration information.

AERO PERFECTION
Perfection is a flawless state where everything is exactly right. It can also be the action of making something perfect.
$CdA - D/(\rho V^2 A/2)$
KASK
Aerodynamics, branch of physics that deals with the motion of air and other gaseous fluids and with the forces acting on bodies passing through such a fluid.
NIRVANA
KASK



Cycling heaven in Quebec

Montréal and Montérégie in Canada's Quebec province provide a stunning backdrop for cyclists.

WORDS: AMY MCPHERSON

On first impression, Montréal is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city. The façade of the cityscape has a Gothic Regency x Great Gatsby vibe, accented by skyscrapers and modern residential flats on the outskirts. There are your standard clusters of abandoned warehouses which are, in fact, home to much of the city's urban farms, and the population and its visitors enjoy a dining and wining scene that would satisfy even the pickiest of gourmets.

On second impression, the cycling is amazing considering Montréal, the largest city of Quebec province, is just as busy (and hilly) a city as Sydney.

"We are really surprised ourselves," said Steve. A visitor from Toronto, he and his wife Karen had rented a bike and accompanied me on a short ride along Montreal's historic Lachine Canal. "The traffic is so nice here, and cycling is just so easy!"

"You won't get this kind of friendliness in Toronto," Karen added, "definitely not!"

A Great Cycling City

Montréal is among North America's top five cycling cities, with more than 1,049 km of bike lanes in the city centre and more than 3,200 km in the greater Montréal area. Half of the population lives within 200m of a cycling path, and almost every major road that cuts through the city and the number of bridges that cross the rivers that surround the city, has a segregated cycle lane from the traffic.

But I didn't get on a bike to just get about the city centre. I wanted to check out where cyclists of Montréal go. At the time of my visit, the city was about to host its annual Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal, the one-day race Michael Matthews (aka Bling) particularly loved, having won a Canadian double in Montreal and Quebec in 2018 among his other successes.

"I love to go to Canada every year because I love circuit racing in general," said Matthews in a recent comment to *Bicycling Australia*. "The thing that I love most of all about Canada, and particularly in Montréal, is that it is such a beautiful place. The people are always super nice, and it's not that often these days that we get to race a lot outside of Europe, so that makes it extra special."

The one-day circuit of the Grand Prix Cycliste de Montréal runs on a city loop surrounding Mount Royal Park and the University of Montréal. The sharp, punchy ascends of Mount Royal make this an excellent training area for the city's many cyclists, and to no surprise, it is one of the highlights of Matthews' race.

"The circuits in Quebec and Montréal are really hard. They have tough, steep climbs that we have to tackle every lap, which makes the racing very exciting," he said, "I have great memories of so many fans coming out to support us, lining the roads and getting involved, enjoying the atmosphere and it's a really nice vibe."

MA BICYCLETTE

TOP: Cycle shop and cafe on the Lachine Canal. Credit – Stephanie Thompson.

ABOVE: Montérégie has many great cafes and coffee stops for the gourmet cyclists.

The nice vibe is definitely what I was getting, as I attempted one of the climbs leading up towards the view point of Mount Royal Park. From there, you can see much of the downtown in all its glory, all the way towards the river and the canals where a crisscross of cycling paths await my discovery.

Of the many great cycling routes from the city, I chose the loop that followed the historic Lachine Canal to Parc René-Lévesque at the end of the peninsula, where I found myself semi-racing those training on the sculpture park's loop. At Atwater Market along the canal, I stopped for a coffee and a quick browse of possible mid-ride snacks (I settled on an almond croissant) and watched a family sliding along the canal on rented canoes. After four loops of Parc René-Lévesque, I turned back towards Montréal along the St Lawrence River, where I discovered you could surf and kayak the Vague à Guy rapid.

Beyond Montréal

Being able to take my bike on the train and Metro network during off-peak hours means I can save myself a bit of a leg for the longer rides to come.

Montréal is a good base to access many of Quebec province's 'Route Verte', dedicated cycle paths that link heritage towns through nature, wineries, and farmland around the adjoining Montérégie – great for one long ride day or as a bike-packing adventure away from the city.

From Montreal's Bonaventure-Central Station, I took the bike on the Réseau Express Métropolitain (REM) train to the town of Brossard. Unfortunately, this is as far as the train will go, so kicking off towards the east, I navigate my way to Chambly.

Chambly has many delicious distractions to get my teeth into (literally). Following Route Verte 1 signs, I spot lovely cafes and restaurants along the basin and canal waterfronts. A quick photo stop at the historic Fort of Chambly, I got a little peckish. Just as well, Chambly is part of the Veloroute Gourmande, a cycle route for

“...THE SHARP PUNCHY ASCENDS OF MOUNT ROYAL MAKES THIS AN EXCELLENT TRAINING AREA...”

gourmets, so it was only fitting that I stop here for a grilled cheese sandwich with ham and apples. At the microbrewery, Délires et Délices, I washed it all down with the house-brewed beer and bought a box of chocolates from the FG Chocolatier factory for the road.

From Chambly, I could have followed a selection of cycle routes if I had more time or been better prepared for a multi-day bikepacking trip. I could have cycled 20 km on the Canal de Chambly bike path to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, then connected to the La Montérégiade cycle route built on a former railway line. Or I could cross the Richelieu River to connect with the cycleway La Route des Champs, both of which would eventually take me to Granby, with more microbreweries, wineries and sceneries along the way.

In hindsight, that would have been a great big loop if I had planned better and stayed a couple of nights in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. I guess I always need a reason to return. BA

ABOVE: The colours of Quebec’s nature add to the allure of cycling in the area.

ABOVE LEFT: Amy enjoyed cycling along the Historic Lachine Canal.

More about Montréal

Montréal will host the 2026 UCI Road World Championships, at the same time celebrating its 50th anniversary as a host city of the 1976 Olympic Games. **mtl.org**

Hôtel Alt Montréal is a cyclist friendly hotel on the Lachine Canal. **germainhotels.com/fr/hotel-alt/montreal**

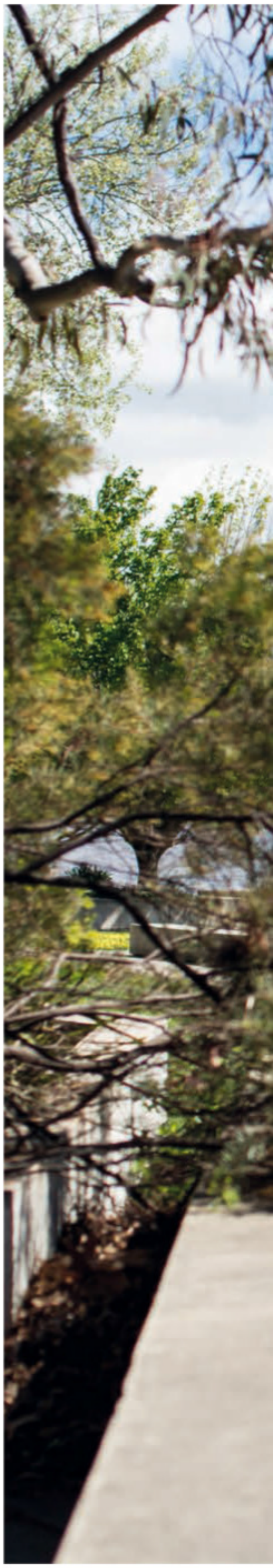
Trek Bikes has a good selection of local rides in Montréal on their website **trekbikes.com/ca/en_CA/greatrides/montreal**

For more information on Route Verte and cycling beyond Montréal **routeverte.com**

Cycling Lake Burley Griffin

Our long-time collaborator, Mick Fletoridis, reflects on the benefits of a weekly bike ride with mates around Canberra's iconic lake – to ride, have a chat, a beer, and eat dodgy snacks.

WORDS: MICK FLETORIDIS



Firstly a confession. Until recently, I haven't been a regular cyclist since high school, when a pushy was my only form of transport. From that time on I tended to favour petrol-engined bikes.

Years later, in Sydney, I bought a mountain bike to improve my fitness and take advantage of nearby bush tracks far away from the hustle and bustle. Unfortunately, it was a flash in the pan, and I didn't ride enough to get the full benefit.

Fast-forward to now, though, and the situation has changed – I'm a regular cyclist, albeit a mostly once-a-week social rider, but I'm loving it. I'm not sure why it took me so long!

Back story: After returning to my home city of Canberra a few years ago, I reconnected with some long time mates and met some new ones. The catalyst was a casual Wednesday gathering of 'ride what you brung' cyclists at Bowen Park, East Basin, Lake Burley Griffin (LBG). The mostly flat winding loop of the lake is around 30 kilometres, (depending on which tracks you take...) and skirts noted landmarks of the scenic nation's capital – the National Library, Carillon, National Gallery, Old Parliament House, Government House, to name a few.

The regular riding bunch varies from a few diehards on bad weather or winter days to healthy numbers during daylight saving (October to March) and is made up of a mix of ages, political views (don't go there...), interests and levels of fitness. It's a mix that provides some interesting banter on the LBG pedal, depending on who you ride alongside!

When I went on my first rides with this bunch my on-bike fitness compared to the long time regulars was badly lacking. I struggled. I put the huffing and puffing down to my choice of ride, an old Giant mountain bike, instead of considering most of the bunch had been doing the ride for 20 years or more.

Foolishly, I bought a new hybrid 'town' bike in a bid to keep up. After a few Wednesdays riding the wheels off that shiny thing, I discovered it wasn't as comfortable as the old Giant – not the answer. After a few weeks of riding into blasting westerlies, I sold it and then I did what any struggling older cyclist would do, I got an e-bike ... but only after long-time regular, Al, did first.

While our ride around LBG isn't a race, I soon found out there's pride to be had in staying close to the bunch, especially when near the finish and enjoying post-ride banter over beer and snacks. Of the latter, though, healthy snacks don't seem to be a requirement, as youngster of the group Ryan often demonstrates – not sure if he was actually responsible, but, Donut Twisties anyone...? That said, not all snacks eaten on ride day are unhealthy – Al was spotted thrashing his way through high grass to

Cyclist beside Lake Burley Griffin, Credit: VisitCanberra

ABOVE: The Wednesday ride group.

ABOVE RIGHT: Balloons over Lake Burley Griffin, Credit: VisitCanberra.

OPPOSITE: Cycling by Lake Burley Griffin Credit: Damian Breach for VisitCanberra.

eat fresh wild blackberries, prompting the rest of us to join in. Good much-needed fuel for the steep upcoming climb near Government House (appropriately nicknamed 'Ticker Hill').

Not just about drinks and snacks, the post-ride is also a time when all manner of topics get aired and laughs are shared. Good enough reason not to be the last man/woman riding, in case you miss all the fun, or get talked about... While there has been the odd tyre blowout or e-bike mishap (advice: don't attempt YouTube hacks to override speed limiters), the group looks out for each other and help or advice is usually quickly on hand.

While no one needs an excuse for a bike ride, as long-timer Ian 'Plattsy' Platts explains, the mental health benefits of a weekly bike ride with mates when you can switch off after a stressful day can't be overstated.

"After a hectic nine or ten hour work day, that hour and a half on the bike once a week just helps you relax and not think about that other stuff," he tells me. Despite what might be happening before any of us jump on the saddle, that couple of hours of riding and talking and having a laugh once a week helps put most things in perspective. It brings us back to what's important, which can be as simple as just having a laugh.

The obvious benefits of regular exercise, too, are well documented. Some of the group have experienced physical injuries in the past from other activities that meant cycling was the next best option to keep fit; Plattsy suffered a water skiing injury that saw him jump on a bike for the first time. He hasn't looked back since and is now a real cycling enthusiast, regularly tinkering in his shed building wheels from scratch, and he recently put a project bike together.

One group newcomer recently returned to the saddle following a bad mountain biking accident that put him out of action for five years. He told me he often rode the challenging tracks of Mt Stromlo regularly before his crash. He also related how he struggled with mental health while off the bike for such a long period. Having recently bought a new mountain bike and kitted it with extras like his previous one, he says he's thoroughly enjoyed his first rides. He now plans to become an LBG group regular and get back to riding Mt Stromlo sometime soon.

2002

The group ride started in 2002 when a few of the current bunch started meeting up to ride Lake Burley Griffin to help their fitness

Some history

The group ride started in 2002 when a few of the current bunch came up with the idea of meeting up to ride Lake Burley Griffin to help their fitness for 24-hour enduro mountain bike events. “It then progressed to become a more social thing,” says Plattsy who has been attending since those early rides.

“I was about 30 when I started back around 2007,” says another regular, Tim, adding, “I was getting fat from beer... so I had to do something to go with it, it can’t be all one way, and I knew Plattsy from work and he said come for a ride around the lake.”

Neil ‘Sooty’ Sewter is a semi-often rider who puts in an appearance in between stints away snow skiing or fishing. Interestingly, Sooty has seen other more enjoyable benefits to the ride. “I did the calculations, if you do a full lap, 31 km, you can have two stubbies,” Sooty says with an almost straight face, leaning heavily on bloke logic.

“The ride and the beers cancel each other out,” he adds grinning. After enduring the full loop ride in strong winds it’s hard to argue with the joys of a cold ale afterwards, and generally no one in the group does. Socialising after the ride is a very enjoyable aspect of it and something that definitely feels well earnt after battling a strong nor-west headwind, frequently experienced on rides in the latter part of winter and early spring.

Paul McKie, another long time regular recalls clearly how the ride started.

“In 2001, my wife and I went out to Stromlo (Forest), before the bushfires (which razed the area to the ground in 2003) and watched the 24-hour mountain bike race sponsored by Mont, and we thought it was absolutely brilliant. It was all sorts of people of different shapes and fitness doing this race, it was really friendly, it was really low key... I said let’s get a group of guys together (and enter the next one).”

Paul did, along with Sooty and a couple of other riders including Andrew ‘Dormo’ Dorman who hasn’t put in an appearance at the lake recently, reportedly due to too much time spent playing golf.

“We thought it was absolutely fantastic,” says Paul who explained the team did the next couple of Stromlo events and he completed six 24-hour events in various locations. Sooty notably competed in around 12 similar 24-hour races.

“Since 2002, we have been coming down here every Wednesday night for fitness for the races. We’ve done it ever since.”

The first 24-hour mountain bike race at Stromlo reportedly attracted 1,200 competitors explained Paul. “It got up to 2,400 competitors. That’s how popular it got.”

While the ride gathering is casual there is one rule, as Plattsy is quick to stipulate: “We leave the carpark (at Bowen Park, East Basin) every Wednesday at 5 pm, no exceptions. It’s very low key though ... if you’re here, you’re here.”

On that note, newcomers are welcome to join in. Come on down and introduce yourself; we’re a friendly bunch. Feel free to bring along a cold drink and some ‘different’ snacks of your choice to share. BA

Canberra cycling

Cyclists in Canberra are blessed to benefit from an extensive ever-growing bike path network that links most parts of the city and provides a convenient way for leisure riders and commuters alike to enjoy a safe pedal away from the busy road network. The bike path system is provided on a share-use basis and as well as cyclists is also frequented by walkers, joggers and a growing number of electric scooter, skateboard and unicycle users. As a result, a weekly cycle around Lake Burley Griffin – especially during the warmer months – can provide a level of patience (and require a working bell!) to avoid incidents with other bike path users. That said, most cyclists around the lake are courteous and seemingly do their best to safely share Canberra’s bike path system with other users.

For more info on Canberra’s bike paths and specifically riding Lake Burley Griffin visit www.transport.act.gov.au

Affordable stylish cycling wear

BOWY Active Cycling Apparel is the brainchild of Queenslanders Sarah and Allan, who spotted a need for affordable cycling clothing with simple, stylish, modern designs. As cycling and fitness enthusiasts, the couple created their cycling wear brand to suit riders out on the road, on gravel, or on indoor trainers.

The range includes their popular bib shorts for men and women.

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Can I still be coached without the tech?

Amy McPherson tries out some training with a coach without having to buy additional gadgets.

WORDS: AMY MCPHERSON

Amy with Coach Richard Carrington.

Gadget envy is a thing, and I've long been jealous of the fancy tech most cyclists seem to have at home to assist with their training. Instead of a Garmin watch, I just use the Strava app on my phone. I have no heart rate monitor, have no idea what zones I ever train in, and honestly cannot see myself ever being able to afford any indoor training system.

"If you want to take training seriously, you gotta get yourself some of these tech, Amy," said a friend of mine recently.

In a way, I can see how technology can make things easier. Training plans often refer to training in heart rate zones, which requires you to monitor the heart rate during training sessions. There's also a lot of training that looks at cadence and power zones, none of which can be accurately followed without some form of gadget measuring the numbers.

Do I really need it though? At the time, I'd just finished reading the biography of Gino Bartali, Italian champion and war hero, whose training in the 1920s consisted of just going out for rides in the hills of his native Tuscany. I mean, sure, he was also prescribed cigarettes and espresso to elevate his heart rate before his races, but the point is, can't I just train without all the fancy tech?

Training with what is available to me

I wanted to verify this theory. Because I am based in London, I enlisted London based coach Richard Carrington, who is a coach for the local team London Dynamos, to help me with this test. I've never been trained before, so it would also be something of an experiment for me.

"Of course you can train without all these technology," said Richard when we first discussed the idea. "Although for the sake of measuring your progress, can I at least lend you a heart rate monitor just so I have the data?"

The basics then. I have access to a smart phone, on which I use the Strava app mostly to log the route and time of my runs and rides. I have access to a gym, which I can strength train and use the indoor spin bike for the rainy days of London. I only strap on the heart rate monitor to obtain data for the coach, but I don't look at it during training.

After a timed ride around our favourite loop in the park to obtain a baseline for performance review, the experiment began.

A typical training week

I remember a conversation with a fellow rider at an event about getting a coach to help with training, and his words rang in my mind as I received my instructions from Richard in the early weeks of being coached.

"Make sure you work with a coach who is open minded about creating training plans that tailor to what works best for you," he had said, having told me the story of a coach he had who just had one method for all and it simply didn't suit him. "after all, if you are unhappy with the training method, you are less likely to be motivated to follow it."

Thankfully, Richard understood my time constraints, lifestyle and preferences and created a training plan that suited me.

My typical training week involves two power sprints/intervals sessions, one long zone 2 ride, one session involving some form of hills, one weights session for strength, one run day and one rest day.

Each week, Richard and I will meet and discuss how I felt and what we need to focus on. He also made sure to alter the plan for the weeks when I have my period, understanding that women do need this consideration.

Measuring zones without knowing the zones

The training plan Richard gave me was not dissimilar to the plans he provides his other clients. Therefore, I needed a way to learn how to do a zone 2 ride without monitoring my zone 2 heart rate.

"Let's work with the RPE, Relative Perceived Effort," Richard explained. "It needs you to understand how your body feels at different levels of effort put into your physical activity and adjust how much you put into your training accordingly."

As it turns out, if I can sing a song continuously during the ride without getting breathless, then I have maintained zone 2.

What about cadence and power? Well, if the plan said spin at around 90+rpm, I pretty much just spin as fast as I can. Where it comes to cadence and power, there was unfortunately no other way to measure than to just go for it.

Although it is obviously not always going to work, because I am not the greatest at feeling my heart and often, as data was being analysed by the coach after my training, I was always training at a higher zone than I was feeling.

"In a way, it doesn't matter, because you are still training. It does mean that you may be more fatigued than you should be for the overall program," Richard reassured me about two months into the plan. "But from what I can see, you are improving!"

The result: Consistency wins

He wasn't wrong. At the end of three months of training, I had timed 40 seconds faster than my baseline time at the lap. I was definitely getting stronger and faster.

Still, I wanted to know how I compared with the progress of his other clients. I asked if, in the situation where I had monitored my training with a watch, measured my cadences and power output with a proper gadget and followed training zones exactly as prescribed, would I have improved a lot more by the same time?

"Not necessarily, and the difference would have been very marginal at your level," he said.

"Everyone is different, and what was very evident about you is that you were consistent. That is probably more important than having the right tech." BA

ABOVE: Amy riding at the recent European Media Cycling Contest in Italy's Emilia Romagna region. Credit: Natalia Santolaya.

Fizik's Custom 3D Saddle

Just about every aspect of cycling has undergone significant change in recent years, including the humble saddle, as we see here.

WORDS: NAT BROMHEAD

ABOVE: A fizik factory rider demonstrates the One-to-One fitting system during our time in Italy.

It's fair to say fizik's unique 'Adaptive' saddle series quickly ingratiated itself as one of the world's more respected and revered saddles over recent years. The 3D printing technology perfectly suits the most critical touch point between the bike and the rider. Why? Well, they're comfortable, efficient, light in weight, and – although it's subjective – they look great!

Almost five years on from the launch of the Italian company's game-changing 3D printed saddle technology, fizik has upped the ante with their 'One-to-One' proprietary pressure-mapping design and fitting service.

Bicycling Australia was at fizik HQ in Italy for a demonstration of the new tech in the days before its official launch. Enjoying an eye-opening factory tour and then seeing exactly how a custom saddle is personally mapped out then ultimately printed and dispatched, the process is absolutely fascinating. Our first impressions? This may well be the future of performance saddle tech.

To get started, the rider visits one of a select number of fizik dealerships that have the equipment and trained staff. What follows is a dynamic fit session to identify the ideal saddle shape while highlighting pressure peaks, hotspots, areas of imbalance and instability.

To do this the rider's own bike is put on rollers, and a hi-tech saddle cover containing pressure mapping sensors is placed over the rider's preferred fizik adaptive saddle model that's been carefully measured and fitted to the bike.

The rider then undergoes a pressure mapping and measurement session where unique biometric data is captured to assess how forces are distributed across 64 touchpoints on that saddle. This is done via instruction from the trained staff and via prompts from fizik's One-to-One fitting app. For increased accuracy, the measurements are taken in a range of different riding positions and motions. Key areas of focus include peak pressure hotspots, instabilities and asymmetries.

Once the data has been captured, analysed, and ultimately saved, a bespoke 3D padding structure is designed to match the cyclist's needs. They can then choose between carbon and Kium rails before completing their order.

As soon as that order has been processed, the data is sent (via the app) directly to fizik HQ. From there the saddle goes into the print queue, is custom printed, finished and dispatched anywhere on earth.

After the saddle has arrived, cyclists can return to the dealership for a final consultation session where their new pressure data is compared to their former saddle setup, highlighting the areas of improvement.

Three years in the making, 15 minutes of measuring

Evolving over the past three years, fizik say the concept takes their Adaptive 3D-printed saddles to the next level, achieving unparalleled comfort and performance.

Speaking to us at company HQ in Pozzoleone, near the famed Monte Grappa region, Brand Manager Giovanni Fogal said the company realises that a good, accurate fit depends on many factors, such as bike geometry, intended use, saddle shape, and position.

"But most importantly, every cyclist is unique," he said.

"Experience, sensitivity, history of injuries, body shape, riding goals. All of this can affect the way we sit on the saddle.

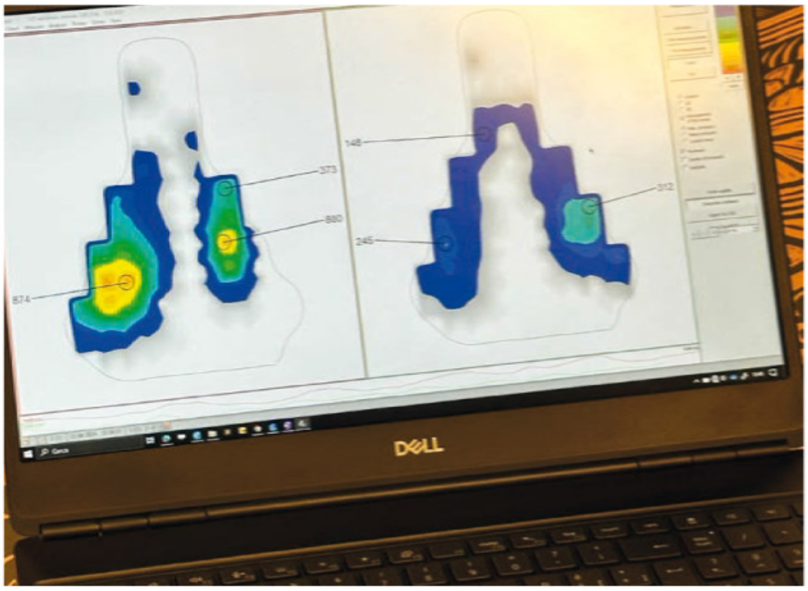
> **"...A HI-TECH SADDLE COVER CONTAINING PRESSURE MAPPING SENSORS IS PLACED OVER THE SEAT..."**

"It's clear that a traditional one-to-many saddle design can only provide an approximate solution to very specific problems. With One-to-One today we achieve what every saddle manufacturer has always dreamed of: bringing to life customised support available to every cyclist."

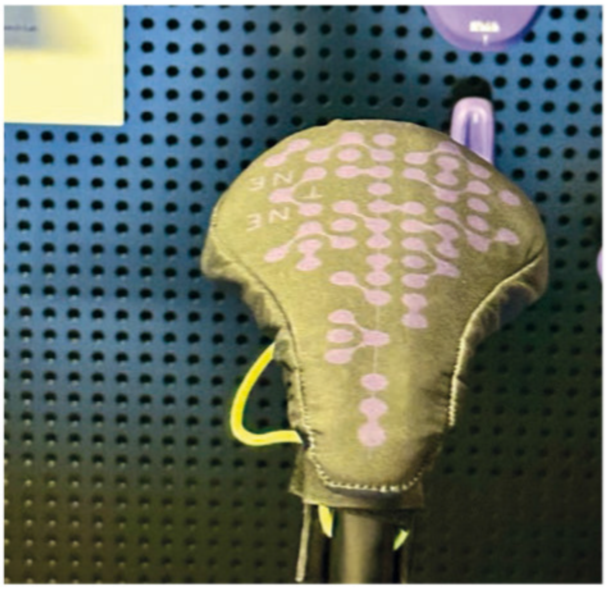
Fizik told us the One-to-One saddles will be priced at the equivalent of around $AU750. Yes, it's a lot of money for a saddle! That said, I have one of their original 3D printed saddles, a five-year-old saddle in lime green of all colours, and it's still as good, supportive and comfortable as new.

It's fascinating tech, the saddles ooze quality and style, and they're an exceptional additive to a ride. Plus they look amazing!

Find your closest fizik dealership offering One-to-One, and more information at fizik.com

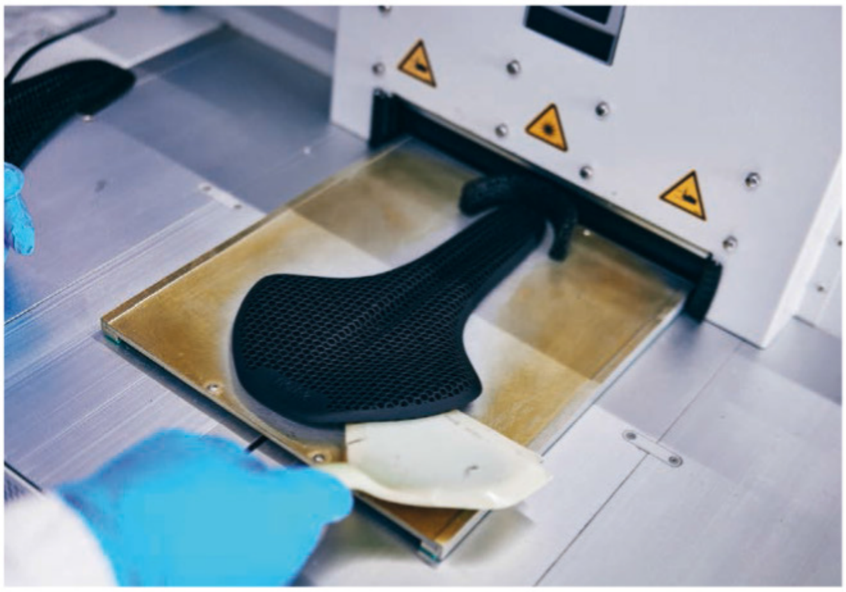


ABOVE: The unique pressure mapping data after the above pictured fitting session.



LEFT: The pressure mapping sensors are embedded inside this cover that is placed over the rider's chosen Adaptive saddle.

BELOW: Each rider's saddle mapping data is electronically sent to the factory and printed in fizik's hi-tech Carbon 3D printer.



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50 Kask Nirvana Aero Helmet
52 Tailfin Frame & Top Tube Bag
54 Black Inc 48/58 Wheelset
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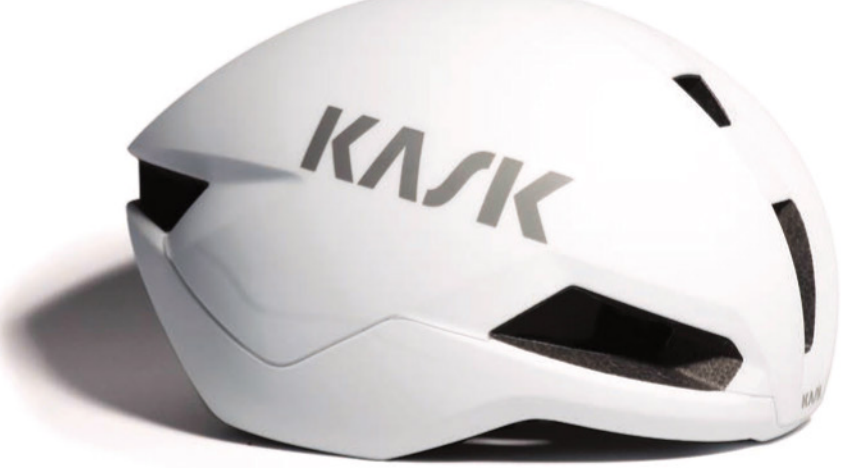
Kask Nirvana

While its aerodynamic benefits are somewhat lost on me as a rider, the Kask Nirvana helmet is an impressive piece of cycling gear.

WORDS: NICOLA RUTZOU



Described as aero perfection, Kask says its new helmet is designed to guarantee minimal drag while delivering optimal comfort. It's firmly targeted at road and track cyclists and triathletes who seek aerodynamic advantages over their competitors and fellow riders.

Kask says that the development of this aero helmet utilised complex computational fluid dynamics simulations, which measured aerodynamic performance, ventilation, and thermoregulation. Now, that's a huge mouthful of words, but in short, the company has developed an impressive aero helmet.

Kask claims that the development process has resulted in a 35 per cent lower drag and a 19 per cent increase in ventilation compared to the Utopia Y, the existing Kask aero model. And while it's not possible to verify these claims, the helmet really looks the goods on aerodynamics.

The first thing I noticed about the new Nirvana is the lower sides, or ‘ear covers’ as Kask calls them, that cover the top of your ears. I assume this is to make it more aero because ears tend to stick out and produce drag, but it has the added benefit of being warmer in cooler weather. My usual helmet is a more conventional design that doesn’t cover my ears in cold weather, so I wear a headband to keep my ears warm.

The next thing I found was the waffle-type pads on the inside of the helmet. Kask says this multi-pod technology, 3D-printed internal padding is designed to withstand linear and rotational impacts better. It functions isotropically, meaning it behaves the same way in whichever direction the force is applied. And while I didn’t try out its resistance to impact, for obvious reasons, it looks and feels like it would withstand significant force.

The Nirvana also has internal channelling that runs either side of the waffle padding from front to rear, allowing air to flow through. I experienced this while riding with the helmet, and despite its significant coverage, my head did not overheat. Kask says the vent arrangement and channel shaping direct the airflow through the helmet at high speed and out of the exhaust ports on the back of the shell.

The channelling is complemented by merino wool padding positioned at the front and sides of the helmet, which makes it comfortable and absorbs sweat.

Like all reputable helmet manufacturers, Kask places a high priority on safety. After all, that’s the number one role of a helmet. The Nirvana is designed in accordance with the KASK Rotational Impact WG11 Test, an internal testing regime adopted by the company that measures the performance of its helmets against rotational impacts.

The Nirvana is adjusted using the Kask Octofit+ system which provides micro adjustments via the rear dial, as well as vertical adjustment of the fitting system. I assume this allows for different sizes and shapes of heads. It also allows people with their hair tied up, like me, to provide a larger gap to pull a ponytail or plait through. It certainly felt good on my head and I also like the faux leather strap that felt substantial under my chin.

“…TARGETED AT CYCLISTS WHO SEEK AERODYNAMIC ADVANTAGES.”

To round out its features, the Nirvana also incorporates a sunglasses port at the front and a reflective graphic at the rear.

It is, however, a substantial investment at $570, but as a high-quality helmet, if it meets its aerodynamic claims, could gain seconds over your competitors.

Nirvana is available in traditional Black Matt and White Matt (tested), as well as in three new Kask colourways, Cherry Burst, Blueberry Fade, and Ultraviolet, which feature graduated shading.

Weighing in at 270 grams (size M), Nirvana is available in sizes M and L at a recommended retail price of $570. BA

FROM TOP: 3D-printed internal padding withstands linear and rotational impacts; The Octofit+ system provides micro adjustments via the rear dial.

Tailfin Half Frame & Top Tube Bag

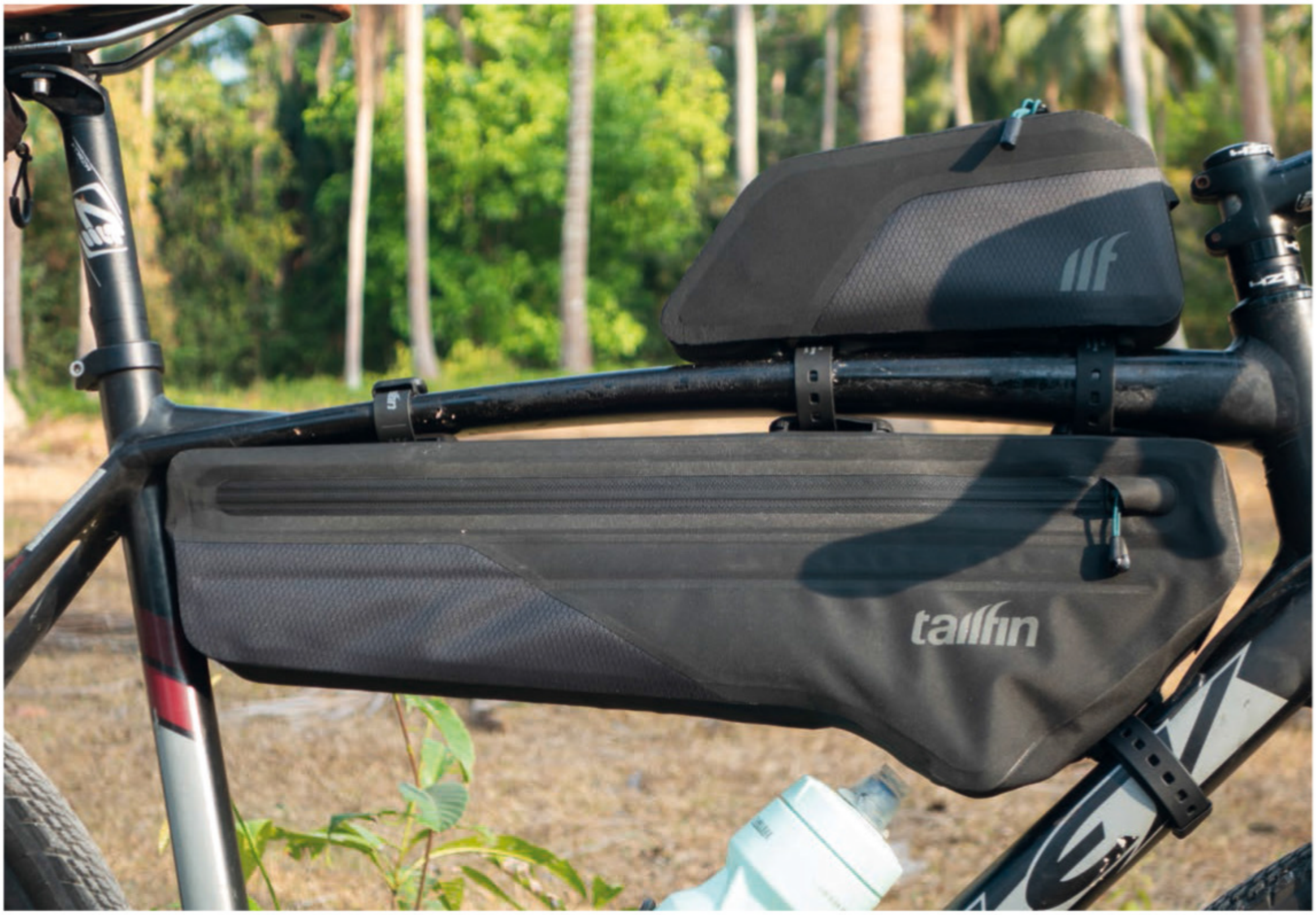
We take a look at Tailfin's new frame and top tube bags – do they live up to the hype?

WORDS: STEVE THOMAS

The most technically advanced frame bags in the world? It's quite a claim that Tailfin makes of their recently released frame bags – but just how advanced can a frame bag possibly be?

There are nine half and wedge bags in the new range, which are designed to cater for all sizes of frames and bottle configurations, and they have a good sizing app to help you choose the right bag, although do also measure manually to be doubly sure.

My own main issue with frame bags is always knee rub when bags are full, and Tailfin has addressed this by creating a welded design from their familiar waterproof nylon fabric, which is supported with a carbon space frame (removable rods) to give it a firm base and flexible but shaped structure.



This combined with their rubber V-mount system (three top and one down tube) and straps do keep the bag firmly in place, and without the chafing you often get with frame bags. There's a large zipped and stretchy left side pocket (map size) and a full zip right entry to the main compartment, simple enough, and yet extremely well thought out all-round.

In use the bag holds firm, and with almost no bulging when full, and I suffered zero knee rub. There's also no rattling of pumps or tools against the frame, in fact I hardly notice it's there.

It's hard to say yet how it will stand up long-term, but knowing Tailfin's product excellence, I suspect it will have a very long life. It's not the absolute lightest or the cheapest high-end frame bag around, and it is not as easily foldable as some, but this is a top-shelf performance bag and is fair bang for your buck.

My only minor niggle were the fiddly detachable inner Velcro pump straps, which is negligible. Hands up, again to Tailfin on this one, it really is as good as they claim.

ABOVE: The top tube bag has a single zip, which can easily be opened one-handed.

> "IN USE THE BAG HOLDS FIRM, AND WITH ALMOST NO BULGING WHEN FULL..."

Top Tube – top bag?

Tailfin released their top tube bags a few months ago in three different sizes and with zip and fast-flip closure options. All bags are fully waterproof and made from the same material as the frame bags. They also have a similar structure to the frame bags, which come from the base frame, a removable insole, and the material welding. Frame attachment is via two V-mounts and straps or direct mount (if you have the frame fittings).

The same straps and V-mount spacings are also used on the frame bags, so you can double up on using the same straps to mount both bags together. This "flexible rigidity" also negates steerer attachment, which is another plus. The bag tested has a single "no-jangle" top zip (as used on the frame bag), which can easily be opened one handed on the go.

In use, the bag holds firm and upright and there seems to be no direct frame contact or chafing.

Tailfin says the bag eliminates knee rub, but for me, there was a very occasional knee rub at first, but I soon compensated for it, although when riding out of the saddle, my inner thighs rubbed on the bag. If I'd done a little more research, I would have gone for the 0.8-litre bag, which has a more extreme taper and lower rise, which should sort this personal rub.

As top tube bags go, this is indeed top-notch, as anticipated, and is of fair value. Overall, knee rub is greatly reduced compared to other bags I've used, and if you do suffer a lot of knee rub, go for the smaller option. BA

Specifications

Half Frame Bag

Capacity tested: 4.5 litre

Weight: 350g with four straps

Material: Hypalon & Diamond Ripstop Nylon, 100 per cent waterproof, with Carbon Space Frame inserts and V-mount fitting (no head or seat tube strapping needed), with a hydration/cable port at the front

Size: 506mm long

Price: AU$218 approx.

Top Tube Bag – Zip

Capacity tested: 1.1 litre

Weight: 154g direct mount, 166g with straps

Material: Hypalon/Ripstop Nylon, 100 per cent waterproof

Size: 249mm long, 41mm to 65mm wide(tapered), 104mm tall, with a hydration/cable entry flap at the front

Price: AU$104 approx.

www.tailfin.cc

Black Inc 48/58 Wheelset

They may look like wheels. But as Peter Maniaty recently discovered, Black Inc's 48|58 carbon racing rims are weapons, pure and simple.

WORDS: PETER MANIATY

Black Inc is the high performance component brand of Factor Bikes – and their race-ready 48|58 carbon road wheelset certainly lives up to the billing.

Originally developed to complement the aerodynamics of the Factor Ostro VAM frameset, the 48|58 has been the go-to wheelset for Israel Premier Tech for much of the UCI WorldTour in 2024, including helping Steven Williams seize the ochre jersey at the Santos Tour Down Under last January. Whilst they don't come cheap, they have plenty to offer riders with pockets deep enough to afford them.

First impressions

These wheels look mad fast. Arriving direct from Factor's manufacturing facility in Taichung, Taiwan, the asymmetrical rim sizes – 48mm front, 58mm rear – immediately caught my attention. Given the rims are far from shallow, they're also impressively light, weighing just 1,357 grams for the pair, including pre-installed rim tape. It's equally hard to miss the Black Inc decals which are large, silver and somewhat brash, contrasting boldly with the UD glossy clearcoat carbon rims. More understated black decals are also available.

Overall the finishing is superb, with Black Inc explaining every 48|58 wheel is hand-built before being electronically inspected to guarantee maximum performance and reliability.

Background

The 48|58 wheelset was developed in-house by Factor with extensive Computational Fluid Dynamics simulations and wind tunnel testing, before being honed in the real world with input from their sponsored pro riders.

Given Factor also operates its own testing facilities in Taiwan, the development team was able to explore multiple iterations and prototypes without the need for third-party involvement or expense – something Factor says results in higher quality products with shorter development cycles.

Tech specs

The Black Inc 48|58 wheelset was born through an unashamed pursuit of aerodynamic efficiency in all riding conditions. To achieve this, differentiated rim depths have been specified with a shallower 48mm front and deeper 58mm rear.

Recommended for use with 28mm tyres (tubeless and clincher) the width is reasonably generous—23mm internal and 29mm external—and both rims are designed with an increased leading edge radius that creates an airfoil to optimise airflow

CAUTION
HIGH TRAILER
BLACK INC
BLACK INC
PIRELLI
48|58
P ZERO

and reduce instability in blustery weather, even at higher yaw angles.

The rim layup uses a combination of standard, intermediate and high modulus carbon (T700, T800, T1100). The 48|58 rims spin around silky smooth proprietary hubs with CeramicSpeed silicon nitride ceramic bearings designed exclusively for Black Inc wheelsets.

Factor claims these custom bearings help to reduce rotational drag by up to 20 per cent compared to its previous generation of wheels, a significant number. The hub itself uses a high-flange alloy body which allows for shorter spokes and an increased bracing angle, equating to impressive lateral and vertical stiffness. Fewer spokes reduces weight, but Factor insists durability is not compromised. That said, the maximum ‘rider plus bike’ weight tops out at just 100kg.

Shimano and SRAM compatible freehub options are available.

Installation

Having had my share of tubeless shockers in the past year or so, I’m delighted to report installation was remarkably straightforward. I predominantly ran Pirelli P-Zero 28mm tubeless tyres during the review with both front and rear tyres seating effortlessly first time, barely requiring tyre levers. The tubeless valves that arrived with the wheels were easy to install, nice and airtight, with no issues whatsoever. You can also run them as standard clinchers, of course. The brake discs are centre lock.

On the road

Rolling out for the first time, the 48|58 wheels felt every bit as light as they are and, as I quickly learned, choice of tyre pressure is critical. I initially had them a little over inflated at around 85 psi and they really did float about with extremely light handling. Easing the pressure down to 70-75 psi they were still super nimble, but far more to my personal liking. As always, experiment until you find what works for you. Unsurprisingly, given the generous rim depths and high-flange hubs, the ride feel was very much at the stiffer end of the scale and there was never any shortage of road feedback, especially when running standard butyl tubes.

If, like me, you prefer slightly more compliant days in the saddle, tubeless is the way to go, or at least a switch to TPU tubes. In terms of performance, the stiffness of these rims translates to top shelf power transfer with the 48|58 wheels accelerating brilliantly and then, just as importantly, holding their hard-earned momentum extremely well at higher speeds.

The result was typically a big smile on my face and an overwhelming feeling of efficiency as I hurtled along. Whilst by no means pure climbing wheels, you needn’t fear when the road points upwards either. I found the combination of light weight, excellent balance and silky smooth hubs made for way-above-average ascending, particularly for such deep section rims. They also descended fabulously well with impressive stability and confidence-inspiring handling through fast (and at times off camber) corners. As for the much-lauded performance claims in crosswinds? All I can say is I barely noticed any, despite riding through some reasonably challenging late winter weather.

Summing Up

Light, agile and blisteringly fast, the Black Inc 48|58 is a high performance road wheelset with a high price tag to match. Thrills and smiles guaranteed on virtually any terrain.

RRP: $4,799. More info at blackinc.cc/en-au/products/4858

Santini Bengal

In the market for new summer kit? If quality, performance and style are high on your agenda, this fresh ensemble from legendary Italian brand Santini warrants serious consideration.

WORDS: PETER MANIATY

There's certainly no shortage of cycling kit options to choose from nowadays. That said, if quality, performance and style sit high on your agenda, this ensemble from legendary Italian brand Santini, warrants serious consideration.

Santini Bengal Unisex Pro Fit Jersey

Sheer, lightweight and perfect for the Aussie summer with a UPF 30+ sun protection rating, the Bengal Pro Fit jersey is part of Santini's premium 'Prodigio' collection. It certainly looks the business with a triumvirate of classic coloured hoops across your chest. As tends to be the way with many Italian brands, the jersey sizing is a little on the tight side, so I'd strongly recommend opting for a size larger than usual. (By way of reference, I'm 178 cm, 78 kg and the XL was still quite snug.) Oozing quality, both to the eye and touch, the jersey is nice and breathable, and features long raw-cut sleeves that comfortably hug your biceps, triple rear pockets that are just big enough to carry a large smartphone and a silicone waist gripper. Also worth mentioning is the sustainable use of jersey fabrics made in Italy from recycled PET and waste yarns. The Bengal Pro Fit jersey is available in four contemporary colourways for Spring/Summer 2025: Military Green (reviewed), Nautica Blue, Orange and Vineyard.

RRP $239.95

Santini Unico Plus Nero Bib Short

Contact points can make or break any ride, none more so than your backside. With ergonomic, body-conforming padding and lightweight compression that's firm but never tight, the Unico Plus Nero Bib Shorts are super impressive – and the ideal accompaniment to the Bengal Pro Fit jersey. Balancing high performance with even higher levels of comfort (and mercifully subtle branding) they're made using laser-cut Italian microfibre fabrics and stitch-free thermo welded seams, along with a raw cut finish that keeps them in place without the need for tight or bulky leg grippers. Finished with sheer, stitch-free shoulder straps and Santini's top-of-the-range C3 chamois with shock absorbing gel inserts that feel more and more comfortable the more you wear them, they're a top option for any type of riding, but really come into their own on extended days in the saddle. Not cheap at $300+ but, trust me, your derrière with thank you. I loved them.

RRP $329.95
santinisms.com.au

"CONTACT POINTS CAN MAKE OR BREAK ANY RIDE, NONE MORE SO THAN YOUR BACKSIDE."

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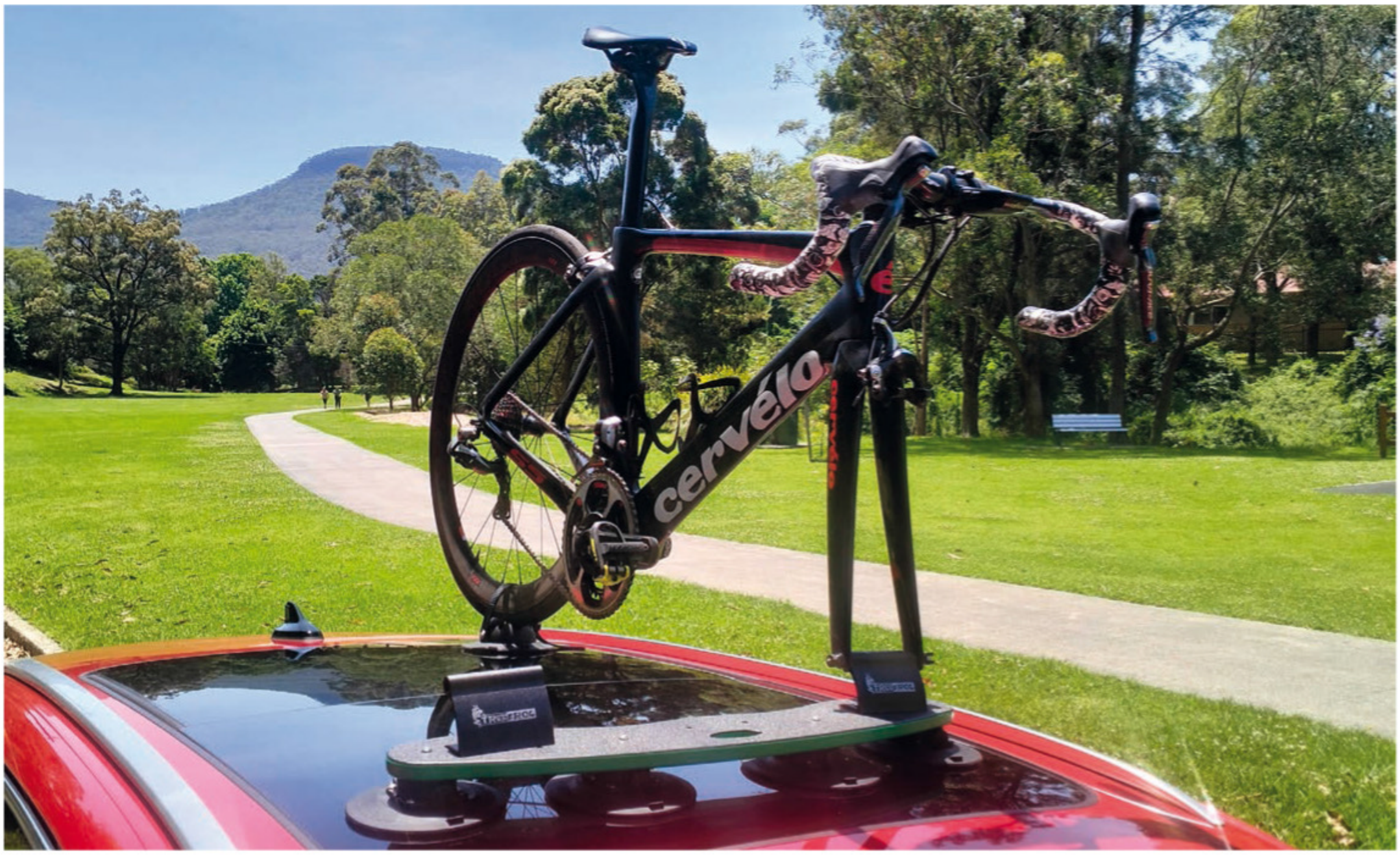


Vacuum Mount Bike Racks

No roof racks? No worries. Luke Meers has been putting the Treefrog Pro 2 bike racks to the test.

WORDS: LUKE MEERS

ABOVE: Treefrog Pro 2, a two-bike rack that can be fitted to the roof of your car in under five minutes.

Imagine carrying bikes on the top of your vehicle without needing permanent roof racks fitted. Well, that's the idea behind these updated Treefrog racks, which suction securely to any smooth surface.

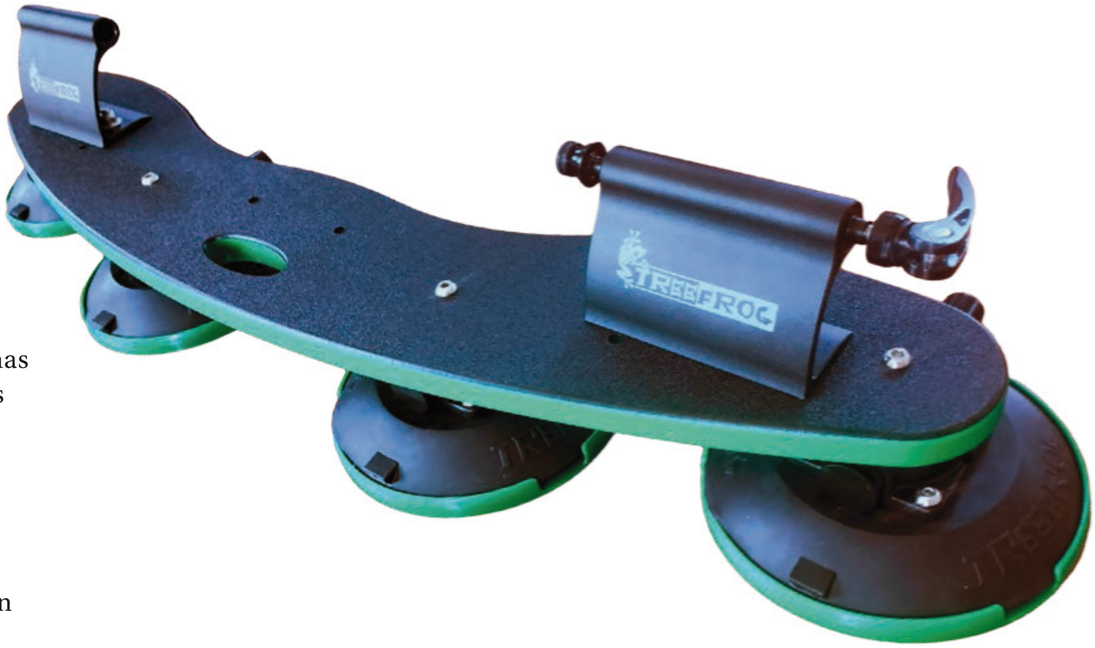
This style of racks is certainly not new to the market, but this was my first time using them, and they offer plenty of unique features that make them an appealing option.

Treefrog has a range of modes of racks, such as single bike racks, but tested here is the Pro 2, which is their two-bike carrying model. With four front vacuum cups mounted underneath the polycarbonate deck, the racks have a max quoted load of 40kg, plenty for all but two of the heaviest e-bikes.

There is a bit of a mental hurdle to convince yourself that these racks can be trusted to carry your valuable cargo. I'm calling this "suction-anxiety" and I can imagine it would be very real for people who haven't seen these racks in action. Once mounted, I manually put a lot of load through the racks in order to try and remove them and I couldn't.

This, coupled with the numerous years these racks have been on the market, was enough to convince me they were safe. Suction-anxiety removed.

Installation is surprisingly simple and quick. First, give the surface a quick clean with something like a microfibre cloth to ensure there is nothing to break the vacuum. Then simply place the rack in position



and use the little pump action buttons to apply the vacuum.

These buttons have indicators on them that show when an adequate level of suction is achieved. This also doubles as the way to check later whether suction has dropped, in which case a few pumps are required to restore full grip.

One potential downside is that these racks require the front wheel to be removed. Treefrog offers front wheel holders that can be mounted separately. Mounting the bike is then like any other front-wheel-off rack.

All the fittings necessary for the various bike options, thru-axle, quick-release, etc. are included. The fork clamps into the front rack, and the rear wheel is strapped in via a sturdy Velcro strap to the single rear mount.

I recommend mounting the bike with the rear cup not suctioned, which then allows the bike angle to be adjusted and optimised. Done. The whole mounting of racks and bike(s) takes less than five minutes.

When driving there is the normal level of wobble and wind noise associated with roof racks, nothing problematic but neither are they silent or completely rigid. Removal of the racks is even simpler and easier than installation, in fact, it is a little disconcerting at first.

> **“THERE IS A MENTAL HURDLE TO CONVINCE YOURSELF THAT THESE RACKS CAN BE TRUSTED.”**

There are small bumps in a couple of locations on the vacuum cups. You simply push back on these like you’re “peeling” the cup off, and quite suddenly, the vacuum is fully released. It seems too easy, but rest assured, this doesn’t seem to be able to happen accidentally during driving.

These racks are super convenient if you are travelling, don’t have or want permanent roof racks, or if you need to switch between cars regularly. They are very versatile in positioning, although this has its limits too. I tried to fit them to the back panel of my family van but the curvature of the back meant the bike chainring would hit the panel; not ideal.

The quick and easy installation and removal are great if you don’t want racks always on your car. The downside is that there is nothing to allow the racks/bikes to be locked to the car. This means a brave thief could theoretically steal the bikes and the racks from your car. It’s unlikely, but I wouldn’t want to risk it for long periods.

Overall, the Treefrog system is easy to use, effective, and looks great on the car. Priced at around $600 to $700 depending on the retailer, they aren’t cheap. However, if you compare this to buying roof racks and two bike racks of similar quality, you actually save money with the Treefrog units. If I didn’t already have roof rack-mounted racks on my car, I would definitely be looking at these for their ease of use and versatility. BA

Distributed by: De Grandi Cycle & Sport

Chapter2 Carbon Wheelset

Chapter2 has entered the wheelset market with this impressive set of hoops to complement their frame range. Peter Maniaty took them around the block.

WORDS: PETER MANIATY

BELOW: A versatile set of aero optimised tubeless ready carbon rims.

It's been seven years since Chapter2 launched its first carbon frameset. Now the New Zealand brand has officially entered the wheel business with the arrival of the REHI45 – an impressively versatile set of aero optimised tubeless ready carbon rims.

"The wheelset is the second most important component on a bike," explains Chapter2 Founder, Mike Pryde, an avid rider and racer who was personally involved in much of the testing and development of the REHI, named after the Māori word for 'racing'. "In order to enhance how our framesets perform, wheels were an obvious addition to our range. It's been an on-and-off project for about three years. Covid and the post-Covid conditions made it somewhat challenging to launch a new product, so we waited a little longer. I've actually been riding a very similar prototype set for the past two-and-a-half years."

First Impressions

Like most things that carry the Chapter2 label, the REHI is a lovely looking wheelset. The black gloss finish with subtle turquoise highlights certainly catches the eye and the gleaming rims and hubs are beautifully finished. Weight-wise you're looking at around 1485g for the set with valves and rim tape – a pretty competitive number, especially given the generous rim depth.

Tech & Specs

Chapter2 is playing it smart with its first foray into carbon wheels. Specifying 45mm rims with hooked beads really maximises the versatility of the REHI, ensuring appeal to a broad cross-section of riders, both on and off road. "We found 45mm is the rim depth that offers the best performance across many conditions, including cross winds, hills, flats and descents," says Mike Pryde, adding the aero optimised profile was originally developed to help maximise the aero benefits of Chapter2 framesets such as the Koko and Toa, whilst still offering a competitive weight.

As wheels continue to creep ever-wider, the REHI measures on the narrower end of modern spectrum with 21mm internal and 27mm external rim widths. Again Pryde says this is quite intentional. "Whilst many manufacturers are going wider on the internal width, we felt that because of the ETRTO requirements for a minimum 5mm difference between internal width and tyre width, 21mm offers the greatest tyre width options, safely. We also felt a hooked profile offers the greatest selection of tyres as well as safety and peace of mind to the user."

The REHI45 wheels are built with Sapim CX-Ray straight pull stainless steel spokes (21F/24R) around Chapter2 branded hubs developed in collaboration with another "well-established wheel brand" (sorry, Mike Pryde wouldn't tell us who, we did ask). Featuring a six-pawl design with 10-degree engagement angle, the hubs are made from 6061-grade structural aluminium and come standard with stainless steel bearings. However, thanks to the use of conventional 6903 and 6803 bearing sizes, ceramic upgrades should be relatively straightforward if you're keen. External spoke nipples no doubt make the REHI wheels a little less aero, but also considerably more straightforward to adjust or replace, particularly when run as tubeless.

In situ, the 28mm review tyres (Goodyear F1 Eagle R) measure pretty much perfectly to size and, according to Chapter2, the REHI rims are suitable for tyres ranging from 28mm to 45mm. Sold as disc brake only, the rotor fixings are centre lock with the option of Shimano, SRAM XDR and Campagnolo N3W freehubs. Each wheelset ships with a pair of tubeless valves and is covered by a 5-year warranty.

On the Road

As already mentioned, REHI means 'racing'. But do they actually deliver that promise in the real world? Fitted to my own bike (BMC Teammachine SLR-01) the answer was a resounding … yes. In fact, overall I found these wheels quite a revelation. Rolling out into the unknown, I was expecting a solid ride experience. But what I encountered was far better, across pretty much every type of terrain and conditions imaginable.

Over five weeks during the depths of winter, I rode numerous fast and flat pacelines with my local training bunch, where the REHI45s handled and accelerated as well, if not better, than my regular, much-loved 50mm carbon race wheels. Once up to speed they really hum along and you can absolutely feel the benefits of the aero optimised rim profile take effect. That said, by far my most illuminating ride was actually a solo 75km journey over rough and heavily undulating roads, in the rain no less, where the REHI45 wheels absolutely excelled – silky smooth yet also pleasantly spritely. They were a whole lot of fun on the inclines too, where I was able to maintain my approach speed extremely well.

Fitted with 28mm tubeless tyres at 70psi the REHI45's tap along wonderfully well and it's clear the hubs are top-notch with lightning fast engagement. There's virtually no discernible delay when you really put the power through the pedals, which I can't say has always been my experience when testing wheelsets. I encountered plenty of wintery cross/tailwinds during the review too and once again the REHI45s performed above my expectations, especially for 45mm rims. You still feel the stronger gusts, but I've ridden far, far worse and the REHI was pleasantly well-behaved in all but the most blustery of conditions. Overall ride quality is fabulous and whilst, yes, you can absolutely race on these and throw them through high-speed corners with total confidence, they also feel like you could ride them all day, day after day, and not pay for it later.

CHAPTER2
GOODYEAR EAGLE F1 R

LEFT: Fitted with 28mm tubeless tyres at 70psi the REHI45's tap along well.

BELOW: The hubs are made from 6061-grade structural aluminium and come standard with stainless steel bearings.

Summing Up

Smooth is fast, and the REHI45 wheelset is the perfect example. As robust as they are responsive, they're a real eye opener; an outstanding all-round carbon package that's as much at home on the road as off it. With an RRP of $2,999 they sit towards the upper end of the mid-range market – a fiercely contested place that wedges them firmly amongst both the smaller boutique wheel brands and the major multinationals. Time will tell if the REHI45 is more of a 'toe dipping' exercise from Chapter2, or something far more serious. Personally, I hope it's the latter, because it's certainly a very promising start. BA

RRP: $2,999
chapter2bikes.com.au

Liv Avail Advanced E+ Elite 0

E-road bikes continue to grow in popularity, with the Liv range recently launched. Our new editor, Nicola Rutzou, put the top-of-the-line model through its paces.

WORDS: NICOLA RUTZOU

The Giant women's brand Liv might be a little late to the party, with many of their competitors having a range of e-road bikes for several years, but they've nailed it with the new Avail Advanced E+ Elite range of women's specific e-road bikes.

It doesn't look like an e-bike. The only giveaways are the control panel on the top tube and the oversized rear hub. Otherwise, it's a sleek machine with a cool paint job that graduates from gloss black to unfinished carbon.

Before we start, I should also tell you that Liv's 'brother' brand, Giant, also has the Giant Defy Advanced E+ Elite range, which has the same specs as the Liv models. So, much of what you read here applies equally. The key differences are the frame geometry and saddle, plus the colour and graphics.

Since e-bikes entered the market, I've been lucky enough to ride several of them, including cruiser-style, mountain bike, and road bikes, so I've got a fair idea of what it feels like to ride one, although I don't own one. Well, not yet anyway.

I've heard many riders say that e-bikes are 'cheating,' but I disagree. E-bikes are an awesome addition to the range of bicycles available. They enable people who might not otherwise be able to ride to get out there, and that has to be a good thing. Whether they are ageing, have a health condition, don't want to sweat on their commute, want to keep up with their faster friends, or just because they don't want to work as hard, e-bikes are great. And contrary to some perceptions, you still get a good workout. You still pedal, put in plenty of effort, and gain the amazing benefits of exercise.

The Liv flagship Avail Advanced E+ Elite 0 model is an impressive road machine. Its geometry is based on the regular Liv Avail, an endurance bike built for comfort and long rides. Liv describes the frame and fork as an advanced-grade composite that balances stiffness, comfort, strength, and precision. So, it's not surprising that it is a comfy ride.

I admire Liv for sticking with the women's geometry bike concept when most other major manufacturers have abandoned it in favour of unisex frames. The other companies still customise for women with componentry like narrower handlebars, shorter stems, and women's saddles, but Liv is the only one that has stuck to the philosophy.

To me, the most important characteristic of any bike is how it feels to ride. Yes, the running gear and other technical stuff are significant, and we'll talk about that later, but the feel is what gets you in.

At around 12kg, the first thing you notice before you even hop on is the weight when you wheel it. It is considerably heavier than my regular road bike by about five kilos, but it seems light and rolls nicely once you're riding it.

Some e-bikes I've ridden in the past have a strong acceleration feeling when you take off and seem to surge forward; this bike didn't have that surge, at least in the lower power modes. Instead, it felt much like a regular road bike, and it wasn't until I started riding that I felt the pedal assistance kick in.

The Liv Avail E+ has five power modes, providing a good range of assistance from minimum to maximum and accessing them while riding is easy with a light indicator strip on the top tube and controls. But the best feature is the buttons integrated into the levers, making it simple to change the power level up and down using your thumbs. On the top-of-the-line model I tested, these buttons are SRAM Bonus Buttons. The other models have SRAM Blips, which are buttons mounted under the bar tape.

For most of my riding on either flat or slightly inclined terrain, I used just the lowest and second lowest power modes. In these modes, it felt like I was riding with a slight tailwind. I think the lowest mode partly compensates for the extra weight, and when I switched it off altogether, I definitely noticed the difference.

ABOVE: At the base of the seat post is an integrated rear tail light.

BELOW: The light indicator strip on the top tube shows the power and battery levels.

The Liv Avail E+ has the same high-end componentry you'd expect at this level.

I increased the power level when I rode up hills and chose the level depending on the steepness and length of the incline. The steepest hill I rode up is about 300 metres long and has a maximum gradient of 9.2 per cent, and the Liv Avail E+ handled it with aplomb. I still had to work a bit, but compared to my regular road bike, it was easy!

Of course, the gears also allowed me to vary the degree of difficulty. It took me a while to get a feel for when to change gear and when to alter the power mode. There are no rules here and each rider will develop their own way, depending on their riding style, terrain and how they feel on the day.

Groupset and componentry

As you'd expect with a high-end road bike, the Liv Avail E+ is equipped with high-quality running gear. The SRAM RED AXS groupset is smooth and sleek. My own bikes are all Shimano-geared, so I've had limited SRAM experience, but I found it simple to master the gear changing and braking.

Gear changes were smooth, and the choice of 33/46T chainrings and 10-33 12-speed cassette seemed the right combination for this set-up, which is not dissimilar to my road bikes.

Braking with the SRAM RED AXS set-up felt comfortable and stable. The addition of good brakes, particularly given the extra weight on steep descents, was comforting.

The Liv Avail E+ provides a smooth and comfortable ride aided by pedal assist.

The bike's cockpit looks like many high-end road bikes, with all the cables running internally. Liv says the handlebars' D-shaped tubing is tailored for women's hands. They have an 8-degree flare drop for stability, and they certainly felt comfortable.

The carbon seat post also features a D-shaped shaft that absorbs road vibrations and shock, reduces fatigue, and keeps the ride comfortable even on bumpier terrain. I also found the Liv Alacra SL saddle comfortable because it is similar in shape and size to the saddles on my own bikes. At the base of the seat post is an integrated rear tail light that is always on while using any power assist mode.

Here is a bit more about the powered part of this bike. A SyncDrive Move Plus motor in the rear hub powers the Liv Avail Advanced E+ Elite bike. Liv says it delivers 30Nm of torque, comparable to 75Nm in a mid-drive motor. You might expect it to feel heavy in the bike's rear end, but it doesn't feel heavy when you're riding.

The 400Wh battery within the downtube accounts for it being a little chunkier than the average downtube, but not in an obvious way. Liv says it includes temperature monitoring and 'smart' charging to extend its lifespan with room in the downtube for an optional 200Wh range extender. It's also easy to access the charging point on the bike, which is located near the base of the seat tube, just above the cranks.

Liv describes several scenarios to explain how the bike functions, and although I was unaware of them at the time, I experienced each one while testing it.

When you start pedalling from a static position, the motor gradually increases the power, giving you a smooth start with no sudden surge of power. Conversely, when you stop pedalling, the motor

150km

the claimed range using optimised battery usage, the 400Wh main battery and a 200Wh range extender.

LEFT: The bike's cockpit looks neat and aero with all the cables running internally.

ABOVE: The responsive SyncDrive motor is housed in the rear hub.

gradually reduces support to avoid a sudden feeling of power loss.

To compensate for the e-bike speed limit of 25 km/hour in Australia, the motor gradually eases off before you reach the speed limit for a smooth transition. I did notice a significant loss of power when I reached 25 km/hour, and while it felt a little weird, I was happy to work harder when it occurred. I suspect that most people in the market for an e-road bike don't often travel much faster than this on flat terrain, so that it won't be an issue. But it's important to be aware of before you hand over your hard-earned cash for one.

Liv says the bike also boosts power on the highest power level. When the motor detects that you're pedalling hard, but your speed is slow, like when riding into a headwind or up a hill, it automatically provides a power 'boost'.

Ride Control App

Like all good electronic devices, the Liv Avail E+ has a companion app Called RideControl. It allows the rider to customise the bike. By connecting your phone to your e-bike, you can customise your motor's support ratio, acceleration timing, and torque settings to suit your preferences. You can even track your fitness by recording and sharing your ride data, including time, distance, speed, calories, elevation, and cadence.

One of the app's most helpful features is the diagnostic check, which allows the rider to check the health of the bike's e-components and the battery level and range in real-time. I didn't use the app extensively, but I could see the benefit, particularly the range you still have left when you're in the middle of a ride.

Specifications

RRP: $16,999

Motor & Battery: Giant SyncDrive Move Plus, Rear Hub, 30 Nm, EnergyPak Smart 400 Wh EnergyPak Plus

Connectivity: Giant RideControl App enabled ANT+ wireless display signal with e-bike profile

Colour: Raw Carbon

Frame: Advanced-Grade Composite, disc, 12 x 145mm

Fork: Advanced SL-Grade Composite, Full-Composite OverDrive Aero Steerer, disc

Handlebar/stem: Liv Contact SLR D-Fuse, Giant Contact SLR AeroLight

Saddle: Liv Alacra SL

Seat post: Giant D-Fuse SLR, Composite, – 5/+15mm offset

Brakes: SRAM RED AXS HRD, ED-RED-E1

Rotors: SRAM CenterLine X rotors (160mm front & back)

Shifters: SRAM RED AXS HRD, ED-RED-E1

Front & Rear Derailleur: SRAM RED AXS

Cassette: SRAM RED XG-1290, 12-speed, 10-33

Chain: SRAM RED E1, 12-speed

Crankset: SRAM Force X-SYNC 33/46T BCD107 chain ring Praxis E Crank Carbon ISIS

Bottom Bracket: Giant E+ System

Rims: Giant SLR 1 E+ 36mm Carbon Disc Wheel System

Hubs: [F] Giant SLR 1, 24H [R] Giant SyncDrive Move Plus, 28H

Tyres: CADEX Classics, tubeless, 700x28c, folding

Clearance (max): 38mm

Lighting: Seatpost clamp integrated tail light

TOP: The charging port is easy to access at the base of the down tube.

ABOVE: The carbon finish of the frame graduates from gloss black to raw carbon.

RIGHT: The SRAM RED AXS rear derailleur provides a smooth and responsive ride.

How far can you ride on a single charge?

Now, the all-important question. How far can you ride? Drivers of electric vehicles speak of 'range anxiety', and riders of e-bikes, I'm sure, also suffer from the same condition.

Of course, there is no one answer to this question. It depends on many variables: the selected power mode, outdoor temperature, wind resistance, tyre pressure, terrain elevation and surface, rider weight and luggage, acceleration, maintenance, and number of charges.

However, Liv reports that with optimised battery usage, the Avail Advanced E+ Elite can reach 150km by using the 400Wh main battery and a 200Wh range extender. Even with just the 400Wh main battery, the range can exceed 100km.

During my test rides of no more than 60km each, I didn't get anywhere near using the full battery, so I suffered no anxiety. I also knew that if it ran out altogether, I'd still make it home; it would just be a bit harder.

You might also like to know how long it takes to charge. Liv reports that it takes three hours and 55 minutes to charge it fully.

The practical stuff

Although it is heavier than I'm used to, I comfortably lifted it into the back of my hatchback to transport it. It is also easy to remove both the front and rear wheels, that are fitted with thru-axles. The front wheel has a removable lever you should carry with you on a ride, and the rear has an attached lever. The tubeless tyre setup was faultless, and the 28mm wide tyres made it a comfortable and stable ride. It will accommodate up to 38mm wide tyres. BA

Summing Up

An awesome e-road bike for women. And I'm assuming the men's version is equally impressive.

It looks and rides like an endurance-style road bike with the added bonus of power assistance that can be dialled up and down as required.

The price of the top-of-the-range bike that I tested is not to be sneezed at, at $16,999, but there are four models in the range that start from a more modest $10,999.

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Teschner SE-33

It's a storied name in Australian frame building. After a hiatus of several years, Teschner is riding again with the release of the special edition SE-33. Peter Maniaty recently put one (as in, literally, build #1), through its paces.

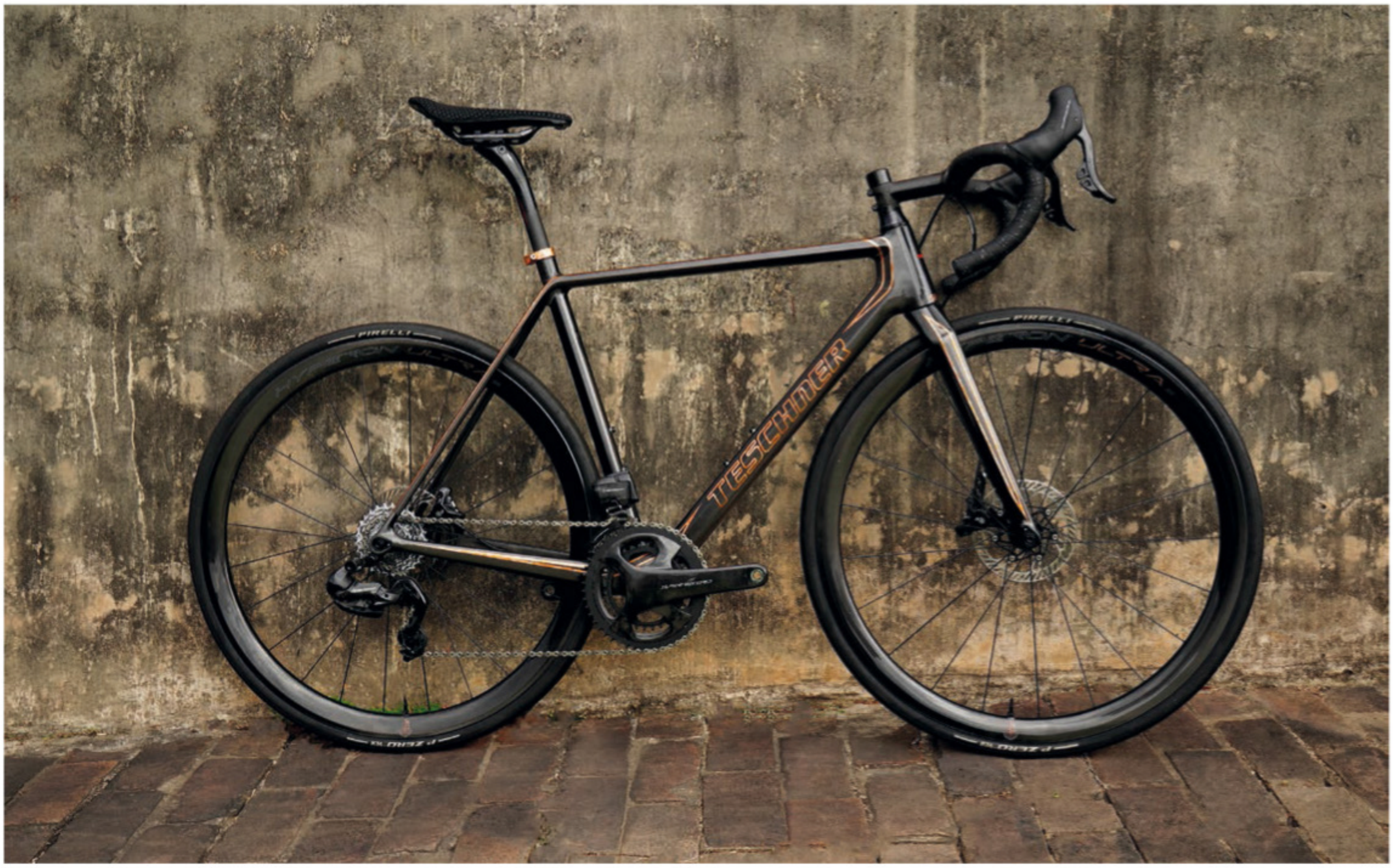
WORDS: PETER MANIATY

Designed in Australia. Moulded in Europe. Hand-finished in Adelaide. The Teschner SE-33 is a limited edition series of 33 carbon road framesets, each individually numbered and custom specified to commemorate 33 years since the brand was founded by Peter Teschner in the early 1990s.

Background

Scrolling through the Teschner honour roll makes for impressive reading. Partnering with the AIS for many years and piloted by riders the calibre of Michael Rogers, Steph Morton, Cameron Meyer, Jack Bobridge, Jordan Kirby and more, its frames were ridden to no less than 24 Australian National Titles, 11 USA National Titles and 10 World Championship Titles (road and track) between 1996 and 2010, whilst also featuring at three consecutive Olympic Games. After 20 years at the helm, Peter Teschner actually sold the business in 2011, before promptly buying it back just three years later. Whilst Peter, now in his 70s, says he never truly left the industry, the SE-33 is very much part of a wider relaunch for the business that carries his name.

"The SE-33 is a commemorative project, but it's also part of a longer-term strategy to reignite the Teschner brand. After reacquiring the business in 2014, I set everything aside for several years. But my passion for innovation was reignited when I joined the bike division of an additive manufacturing company back in 2017," Peter reflects, outlining his involvement in an array of projects in recent years that, amongst



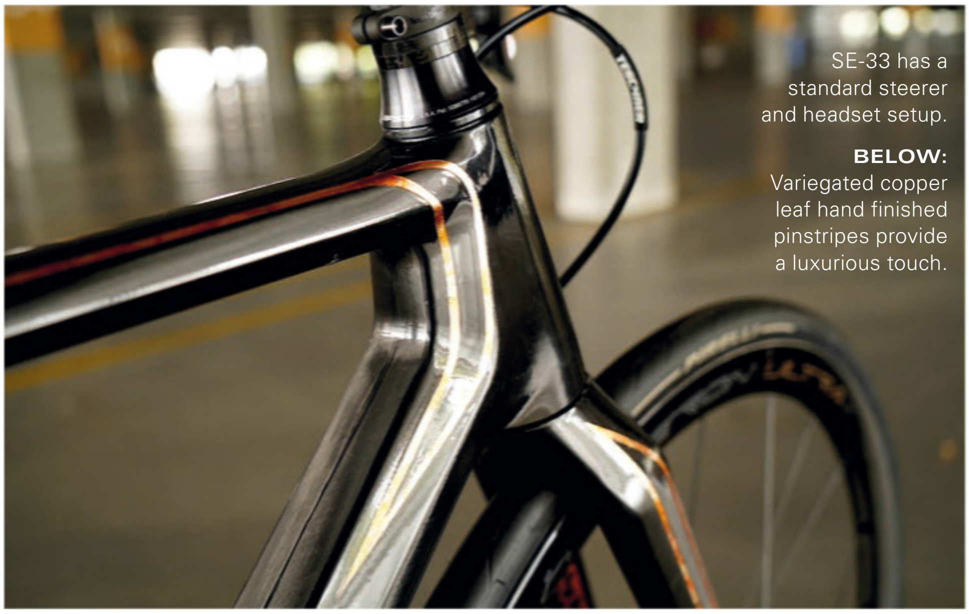
other things, includes the world-first development of 3D-printed bicycle lugs in Scalmalloy, a high strength scandium-aluminium-magnesium alloy. “Innovation has always been my passion and Teschner has thrived by collaborating with individuals and companies who share that drive. The SE-33 is a testament to that.”

First Impressions

Emerging from beneath a mountain of bubble wrap and protective foam in direct proportion to its lofty price-tag, the SE-33 is striking and intriguing in equal measure. As I slowly build it up in my living room, three things stand out. First, it’s incredibly light. The Medium frame weighs just 750 grams and the forks a mere 290 grams, whilst the total build without pedals and bottle cages is a feathery 6.5kg – that’s 300 grams under the current UCI weight limit. Second, the variegated copper leaf hand finishing on the otherwise black tubing is lustrous and exquisitely detailed, with its perfectly imperfect pinstripes catching the light as I move around my work stand. Finally, the Campagnolo gruppo and wheelset are pretty much as good as it gets. This is clearly a unique, and yes, expensive, bicycle.

Styling

Designed in-house by Teschner, the SE-33 presents as a classic double-diamond frame. 100 per cent wireless shifting (more on that in a moment) makes the build entirely cable free, with only the ends of the internally routed brake hoses interrupting the otherwise sleek silhouette. Resisting much of the ubiquity of contemporary carbon builds – there’s a distinct absence of kammtails, dropped seat stays and oversized tubing, for example – it certainly gives off some serious retro vibes, contrasting with what is actually quite an advanced ultra-light monocoque frame. Turns out this is not accidental.



SE-33 has a standard steerer and headset setup.

BELOW: Variegated copper leaf hand finished pinstripes provide a luxurious touch.

> “DESIGNED IN AUSTRALIA. MOULDED IN EUROPE. HAND-FINISHED IN ADELAIDE.”

“Teschner Bikes has never followed trends,” explains Peter Teschner. “That’s why the SE-33 moved away from the popular fast-back seat stay design seen on many carbon frames that are almost indistinguishable from each other. Instead, it features a conventional seat stay design and a unique finishing process using metal leaf foils for decals and pin-striping under an epoxy clear coat – a laborious, four-day task that really sets it apart.”

In terms of colourways, the variegated copper leaf pinstripe and decals are available in nine different shades. Gold leaf and painted options are also available.

Frame & Geometry

The SE-33 frame and fork boast reasonably conventional geometry with a standard steerer and headset allowing for one or two-piece cockpit configurations. Look closely and, yes, there is some contouring going on, most noticeably the down tube and a subtly tapering top tube, but it’s all pretty understated. The bottom bracket junction is robust enough, yet still relatively compact by today’s chunky standards. At just 977mm the wheelbase on the review frame (548mm top tube) is also quite compact, whilst the head tube measures on the shorter side at just 125mm, equating to a reasonably low stack of 534mm. Reach is about average at 384mm.

Produced using resin transfer moulding (RTM) in Portugal, of all places, the SE-33 frame is crafted as a single, seamless entity with no joints, welds or glues. Regarded by

RIGHT: 3D-printed Selle San Marco saddle.

BELOW: Top-of-the-line Campagnolo Super Record crankset with hollow carbon cranks and a titanium axle.

BOTTOM: Metal leaf foils for decals and pin-striping under an epoxy clear coat complete the luxury look.

SUPER RECORD

many as the gold standard in high modulus carbon frame construction, RTM frames are well-known for their extremely high tolerance levels, uniformity and consistency.

"After an extensive search and testing I located a manufacturer in Portugal capable of delivering our vision for the SE-33," Peter points out. "A European-made, RTM monocoque carbon frame that's lightweight and disc-brake optimised." Without giving away all his secrets, Peter also explains the Portuguese production facility is no stranger to crafting high-end frames, partnering with several other well-known European and US brands.

Wheels & Components

Every SE-33 is custom specified and finished to meet the exact requirements of the purchaser. In the case of the review build it's top notch all the way, headlined by a sublime combination of Campagnolo's 12-speed Super Record Wireless groupset, Hyperon Ultra 37mm carbon wheelset, 3D-printed Selle San Marco saddle and Deda Elementi Super Leggera carbon components. Shimano Dura Ace/PRO and SRAM/Zipp options are also available, as well as Campagnolo Record and Chorus if you want to bring the price down a little.

Laced around whisper quiet black aluminium hubs with CULT ceramic bearings, the lightweight Hyperon Ultra wheels (1,240g for the pair) are seriously impressive and fabulously versatile.

But the undoubted star of the review build is the Super Record Wireless groupset which, with an eye-watering price tag of over $8,000, is worth more than many fine road bikes on its own. As you'd expect, shifting is precise and silky smooth.

But when it comes to stopping power, well, it's simply the most brilliantly-modulated disc braking I've ever experienced.

Gone are the once-iconic Campy thumb shifters, phased out since the previous version of Super Record EPS, replaced by twin buttons on each of the ErgoPower levers. Bluetooth communication between the levers and derailleurs means shifting is 100 per cent wireless; however, in an odd bit of Italian design, the front and rear derailleur batteries are completely different and, hence, not interchangeable. Doh.

The compact 48/32T Super Record crankset (50/34T and 45/29T options are also available) features hollow carbon cranks with a titanium axle. Recommended tyre size is 28mm, however, for tyres up to 32mm Teschner can supply a 3D-printed carbon stone/chip shield for the seat tube and BB shell areas on request.

The Ride

Smooth, smooth, smooth. Gliding along without a care in the world, it's clear the SE-33 is a wonderfully balanced all-rounder. The handling is assured. The braking magnificent. The ride position is reasonably relaxed and, overall, comfort levels are definitely on the cushier side of stiff.

Whilst a long way from being a purebred speed machine, performance is still lively and responsive enough to keep things interesting for most riders and 'sports luxury' would probably be an apt overall descriptor. Acceleration is above average, no doubt aided by the ultra-low weight, and it really picks up when you ask despite the relatively modest girth of both the stays and bottom bracket junction.

On the flip side, speed holding is probably a rung or two below that of a more specialist aero build; I regularly found myself working just that little bit harder to hold the wheel in training pace lines compared with my usual (more aero-oriented) road bike. None of this was unexpected, mind you.

Given the sub-7kg featherweight, something I absolutely did expect was for the SE-33 to fly up the climbs. Whilst overall ascending performance was very good, it never quite reached the levels I'd anticipated, or hoped for, when tackling my usual review inclines in and around Sydney.

> **"..THE SE-33 DELIVERS AN ENJOYABLE RIDING EXPERIENCE ACROSS THE BOARD. "**

I put this to Peter Teschner who explained, as a high-end special edition, the design philosophy for the SE-33 was to create a true all-rounder—"Something to be enjoyed, admired and leaving you with a smile on your face every time you walk into the kitchen after a ride," he said – rather than a high-performance racing or climbing machine. Against this measure, Teschner has absolutely succeeded, for the SE-33 delivers an enjoyable riding experience across the board, without ever quite rising to 'class leading' in any one category.

Summing Up

Yes, the Teschner SE-33 is a bicycle. But it's also a statement. Rather than simply mimicking the world's major frame manufacturers, it's a limited edition road machine tailored for discerning riders who place high value on custom design and craftsmanship – and have jersey pockets deep enough to pay for it. The understated retro shaping is juxtaposed by bespoke hand finishing and high-end components at every contact point, all meticulously specified and detailed. The result? An entirely worthy reboot of a significant name in Australian frame building.

Specifications

RRP: $21,950 (as reviewed)

COLOUR: Black/Copper Leaf

FRAME: Teschner SE-33 Carbon Monocoque

FORK: Teschner SE-33 Carbon

HANDLEBAR: Deda Elementi Super Leggera (Carbon)

STEM: Deda Elementi Super Leggera (Carbon)

HEADSET: Chris King (Alloy)

SADDLE: Selle San Marco Shortfit 2.0 3D Carbon FX (carbon rails)

SEAT POST: Deda Elementi Super Leggera

BRAKES: Campagnolo Super Record (Flat Mount)

ROTORS: Campagnolo Super Record (160mm front & back)

SHIFT LEVERS: Campagnolo Super Record Wireless Ergopower

FRONT & REAR DERAILLEURS: Campagnolo Super Record Wireless

CASSETTE: Campagnolo Super Record 12 sp, 10-29

CHAIN: Campagnolo Super Record 12 sp

CRANKSET: Campagnolo Super Record 12 sp (Carbon), 48/32

BOTTOM BRACKET: Press Fit 86.5mm

BOTTLE CAGES: Lightweight Reserve

RIMS: Campagnolo Hyperon Ultra 37 mm w/CULT bearings

TYRES: Pirelli P Zero Race TLR (700x28)

CLEARANCE (MAX): 32mm

MAX SYSTEM WEIGHT: 109kg (based on the review build w/Hyperon wheelset, other wheelset combinations available upon request)

www.teschner.bike

Reid Granite 4.0

Budget brand Reid is not known for its gravel bikes, but they've entered this segment with the Granite range. Luke Meers put the Granite 4.0 to the test.

WORDS: LUKE MEERS

It seems almost compulsory these days for every "proper" cyclist to have a gravel bike. How else are we all going to get to those epic gravel events that are popping up all over the country like our own Dirty Mudgee, or do our dream bike-packing adventure? However, sometimes the investment required for this extra purchase seems impossible or perhaps just fiscally irresponsible. Enter the Reid Granite series of bikes.

You may or may not be familiar with the Reid brand. It started in Melbourne about 12 years ago and was mostly in the fixie and vintage bike scene before expanding into other areas. I associated the brand with the budget end of cycling, so as someone who considers myself a bonafide-shaved-legs roadie, I hadn't given Reids much of a look. So, it was with curiosity that I unboxed and assembled (just mounting the handlebar and wheels) the Granite 4.0.

This bike sits at the top of the Reid gravel range, with three models available below it. Unlike the big brands out there, though, this "range topper" is still at the budget end (~$2k). Jumping straight into some specs, the Granite frame is double-butted 6061 aluminium, with an integrated headset and fitted with a full carbon, gravel-specific fork. Both the frame and forks include numerous mounting points for front and rear racks.

Geometry and Componentry

The geometry is nice and relaxed with generous head and seat tube angles and fork offset (50mm) designed for a stable and comfortable ride over a range of terrain. The drivetrain is 1 x 11 Shimano GRX RX600 throughout with a 40T chainring and 11 to 42 cassette. Brakes are also hydraulic GRX and include 160mm rotors front and rear. The wheels are WTB ST i21 fitted with WTB Riddler 45mm tubeless tyres. My bike weighed 10.4kg. It was not lightweight, but it was about on par for aluminium-framed gravel bikes with big tyres.

Overall, the spec sheets read pretty nicely, especially when this bike is selling for under $1,900. Pretty wild when you would buy just the GRX RX600 groupset for over $1,000. This groupset likely sits between 105 and Ultegra on a quality level. There are so many gravel bike options out there now, but in my online comparisons, the Granite 4.0 stacked up very well in terms of cost-to-spec ratio. I guess it really needs to over-deliver on the value front when the brand doesn't have the attraction or reputation of some of the big names.

How it rides

So the question really is then: how does it ride? And the answer, in a nutshell, is impressively well. I've been riding this bike over hugely varied terrain,

ABOVE: The Reid Granite 4.0 is at home on gravel, fire trails, and technical single track.

BELOW: Integrated headset.

BELOW LEFT: The frame is double-butted 6061 aluminium and a full carbon, gravel-specific fork.

Specifications

Frame: Double-butted 6061 alloy with integrated headset

Fork: Reid full carbon gravel fork

Handlebars: Oversize compact drop bars 400mm to 440mm

Stem: Alloy oversize A head road stem 80mm to 100mm

Saddle: Selle Royal

Seatpost: Alloy micro adjust 27.2mm

Cassette: Shimano CS M5100 11speed cassette 11-42T

Bottom Bracket: Shimano external sealed bearing

Chain: KMC X11 11-speed

Brake Lever: Shimano GRX RX600 hydro disc

Rear Derailleur: Shimano GRX RX600 11 speed

Shifters: Shimano GRX 11-speed STI shifter

Front and Rear Brakes: Shimano GRX RX600 hydro disc 160mm rotors

Chain Set: Shimano RX600 GRX 40T 170mm

Weight: Approx 10.4kg

RRP: $1,890

www.reidcycles.com.au

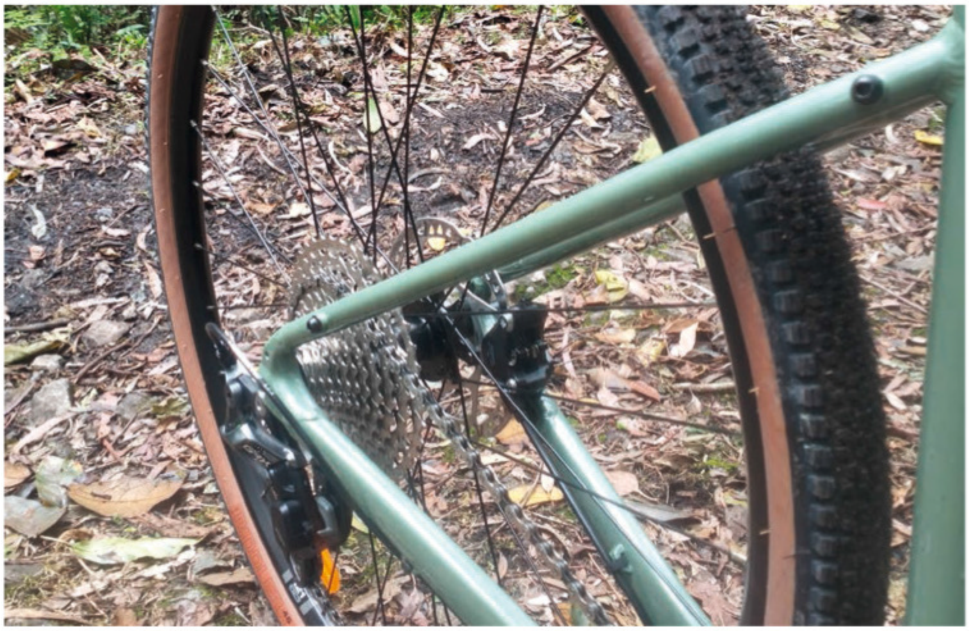
> **"ONCE OFF-ROAD, THE BIKE FELT ASSURED, STABLE AND PREDICTABLE IN EACH SETTING."**

from bunch rides to the commute to work, gravel, fire trails to single track and some more technical mountain bike tracks (not my specialty). The Granite felt quite at home in each of these settings, with the exception of the bunch rides, where tyre choice and limited gearing made life a bit tough.

Once off-road though, the bike felt assured, stable and predictable in each setting. The 45mm tyres helped make things a little more doable when things got too rough, but I was impressed with the range of settings in which I felt like this bike was an adequate choice. Fire trail and dirt roads were (as you would expect) the most well-suited terrain and the Granite handled climbs well and felt assured on faster corrugated descents too. It certainly doesn't feel like a nimble climbing featherweight, and as such, might not be suited to those wanting to ride competitively on gravel, but the flip side of this was confidence that I could throw the bike at pretty much anything and felt assured it would handle a beating.

BELOW: Shimano GRX RX600 11 speed rear derailleur.

BOTTOM: The wheels are WTB ST i21 with WTB 45mm tubeless tyres.



Shimano GRX groupset

The GRX groupset works remarkably well. The 1x setup keeps things nice and simple. The left lever is for braking only, with the right lever handling rear shifts in the usual Shimano fashion. Shifting had, for my tastes, the right mix of suppleness and feedback. The rear mech felt sturdy and fairly rapid in its changes, giving confidence.

The hoods themselves are perhaps slightly chunkier than my preferred size, but when offroad, this felt more appropriate. The levers are nicely shaped to give the index finger a natural seat. Braking was a highlight, with a high pivot point, meaning that good braking power could be achieved in a large range of hand positions with only a couple of fingers. I spent almost all my time riding in the hoods and never felt the need (at least braking-wise) to move to the drops. The clutch on the rear mech worked well, keeping the chain running tightly and smoothly in all situations I threw at it.

10.4kg

weight of the bike – about on par for aluminium-framed gravel bikes with big tyres

The only time I managed to drop a chain was down a fast corrugated descent, where I wasn't pedalling and managed to get a nice harmonic resonance going in the chain, which eventually threw it off the front ring. Only afterwards did I realise that I had the chain stabiliser switched off. This is a small lever on the rear GRX derailleur that allows you to toggle the extra tensioner/stabiliser on when riding in rougher terrain or off for a smoother ride on smoother surfaces. Pretty neat. Note: the spec is listed at GRX RX600, but as far as I can tell, the rear derailleur is common between the 600 and 800 series, the RX812. Nice.

One downside of the enjoyably simple 1x setup was running out of gears. During most of my testing, I never needed more than the 40T front to 42T rear combination, but at the fast end, I did spin out reasonably regularly in the 11 tooth when riding on the road or downhill on fast trails. Unfortunately, there isn't too much that can be done here. There is a 42T chainring option in the GRX range, which would help a little, but then, at the rear end, the derailleur is limited to 42 tooth max. Perhaps cadence drills are the answer.

So, with an impressive spec list for the price and a solid level of performance, is this bike the one to get? Well, as with anything, it depends. There are numerous bikes from other bike brands that get down around the $2,000 mark too. From my research, though, the Reid is right up there in terms of the level of componentry at this price. If you're looking to get something for gravel events or to perform well on climbs, I think you'd be best off jumping at least another $1,000 to 2,000 and getting something with a composite frame. But, if you're looking for a nicely equipped bike that can handle some rough treatment and does most off-road things with confidence, the Reid Granite 4.0 should be considered on your list. BA

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
The Granite 4.0 frame is double-butted 6061 alloy.

The brakes are Shimano GRX RX600 hydro disc with 160mm rotors.

The GRX groupset works well.

Summing Up

QUALITY

The frame build looks quite chunky, with a heavy weld style, but the quality of the frame itself is quite good. The bars, stem, seat post, etc., are all fairly low-end, as you'd expect at this price, but they do their job without any fuss.

PERFORMANCE

It's not a competitive gravel race bike, but for someone wanting to enjoy trails of all sorts and throw in some commutes or just about anything else you'd like, the Granite hits all the targets.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The quality of the bike and running gear you get from this sub $2k machine (Shimano GRX, carbon forks, etc.) is very good. It's hard to beat in the value stakes.

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Lights Out on Mandatory Bike Lighting

A step backward for cyclist freedom and complacency for drivers would come from mandatory bike lighting, but there's a better way writes Lee Turner.

After my nine-year absence, I did Amy's Gran Fondo ride this year. I did it because I wanted to try to qualify for the Gran Fondo Worlds, which are being held on the same course next year. Despite the miserable weather, it was a good day, and I successfully qualified. It's a fun event, and o2 Events, which now owns it, does a great job running it.

What surprised and disappointed me was the commentary from the Amy Gillett Foundation at the start line of the event and again in the Escape Collective. They are now pushing to make bike lights mandatory at all times for cyclists. Whilst this is well-intended, it is a fundamentally misguided policy that could do more harm than good. While the goal of enhancing cyclist safety is universally shared, the means of achieving it through compulsory lights overlooks critical data about the actual causes of cycling accidents and imposes unfair burdens on cyclists.

The Reality of Cycling Accidents

Contrary to the assumptions underlying the push for permanent bike lights, the majority of cycling accidents, especially those resulting in serious injury, do not occur from a lack of visibility from the rear. Research indicates that side impacts at intersections and roundabouts are far more common and hazardous. A comprehensive study by the Transport Research Laboratory in the UK found that a significant portion of cycling accidents involve complex urban intersections where lateral visibility and manoeuvrability – not rear visibility – are crucial. These findings suggest that enhancing front and side visibility and improving road design would be more effective in preventing accidents than simply increasing rear lighting.

Victim Blaming in Disguise

By mandating lights at all times, there is a real risk of reinforcing a victim-blaming culture that holds cyclists responsible for the actions of motorists. This policy insinuates that cyclists are primarily at fault for their own safety, which not only stigmatises cycling but also absolves drivers from practising due diligence on the road. Such a stance is not only unfair but also counterproductive, as it could lead to laxer driving behaviour around cyclists, ironically making roads less safe.

Curtailing Cycling Freedom

The proposal also unwittingly sends a message that cycling is inherently dangerous, which could deter new cyclists from taking up riding altogether. By adding layers of mandatory equipment, we risk transforming cycling from an easy, accessible mode of transport into a heavily regulated activity reserved only for the well-equipped and experienced. This runs counter to global efforts aimed at increasing cycling rates to reduce traffic congestion and environmental impact.

Economic and Logistical Concerns

The economic impact of mandatory bike lights can't be overlooked. For many, cycling is an economical choice. Requiring high-quality lights – and potentially even specific types of lights to comply with new regulations – would impose a financial burden on these individuals. Furthermore, the logistical hassle of maintaining these lights, ensuring they are always operational and dealing with theft risks adds unnecessary complications to what should be a simple activity.

A Smarter Approach to Safety

A smarter approach to cyclist safety would focus on infrastructure improvements that protect cyclists where they are most vulnerable – such as protected bike lanes and redesigned intersections – and on public awareness campaigns that promote safe driving practices. This is where I believe the newly formed Amy Gillet Foundation should have started and put their focus. These initiatives, combined with targeted use of lighting when and where it is most effective, would lead to real, sustainable safety improvements without penalising cyclists. I can't believe, after their collapse, that this is their first focus after reforming. For the record, I always have front and rear lights on when riding in the dark. I never wear black and always try to wear bright, crazy colours, yet I've still been hit. The old excuse of *I didn't see you*, should be replaced with: *I didn't look!!*

Conclusion

The push for mandatory bike lights at all times, though rooted in a desire to increase safety, is a misguided policy that fails to address the primary risks facing cyclists today. It promotes a simplistic solution to a complex problem, burdening cyclists and potentially decreasing cycling rates without achieving its intended safety benefits. As cycling advocates and policymakers, we must challenge such proposals and focus our efforts on evidence-based measures that genuinely enhance cyclist safety without compromising the freedom and accessibility of cycling. The successful Metre Matters campaign, whilst not really being policed or enforced, was good for making drivers aware that they need to give riders space. Mandatory lights for cyclists do nothing to help. I don't want to see Police pulling over kids riding to school and fining them for not having lights. BA

> “A SMARTER APPROACH TO CYCLIST SAFETY WOULD FOCUS ON INFRASTRUCTURE.”

ABOVE: Lee Turner in action at Amy's Great Ocean Road Gran Fondo.

OPPOSITE: Lee Turner (left) riding in Peaks Challenge.

Banking on success

No matter how gifted, how fit and strong, or how many wins, one athlete is never a sure bet, but in professional sport, sometimes you have to go with your gut, writes **Anthony Tan**.

The 2024 UCI WorldTour ended with the 5th edition of the Gree-Tour of Guangxi in China on October 20, though most of you had probably tuned out eight days earlier after some bloke called Tadej Pogačar won edition number 118 of *Il Lombardia*.

It was his fourth successive victory in 'The Race of the Falling Leaves' and if you include his general classification wins – in chronological order, the Volta Ciclista a Catalunya, Giro d'Italia and Tour de France – his season tally totalled 25.

Twenty-five wins. From 58 race days. And he's still just 26 years old.

Unlike many of my fellow sporting scribes, I'm not going into comparisons with the GOAT because as Pogačar said himself, "I don't like comparisons [about me] with other people, especially Eddy Merckx and cyclists from that era when I was not even born, because I don't know too much. I was not close to that moment, so I always like to say, 'I like to go my own road, my own path, my own career, and make my own story, and try to live in the moment and not think about the past and history – just live in the present'."

Sounds like a sensible modus operandi for life.

I don't believe it's an attempt to deflect pressure because a man who can't handle pressure doesn't accumulate 88 wins in six seasons, with all bar 18 of those in WorldTour events – and one of the other 18 being his 101 kilometre solo to capture the road world championship in Zürich last September.

Don't get bored, please Tadej…

Even for a wunderkind like him it'll be hard to replicate, or better, Season 2024. "I'll probably have to go to the Tour [de France] again," he told Slovenian outlet *Delo* last October, almost making it sound like a chore (or is that a bore?) to ride pro cycling's blue ribbon event.

Please, Tadej, tell us it's not so easy to win *La Grande Boucle*, because we, too, might die of boredom!

"I will most likely be at the Tour of Flanders again, which I missed this year, but I am also thinking about taking part in the Vuelta.

"I might try all three [Grand Tours] in the same season when I'm a bit older. We'll see, I don't feel like being away [from my family] for so long. Next season, we will again undertake two three-week tests, but various possibilities remain open in the future. I may only want to do one three-week race again."

I'm not just saying this for posterity, but cycling history is littered with far more failed attempts at defending one's Tour crown than succeeding at it.

And as far as I'm concerned Pogačar's nemesis Jonas Vingegaard, 21 months his senior, is far from done. When it comes to the Tour, the pair have been a level above the best of the rest.

A few months back, on an episode of Lance Armstrong's 'The Move' podcast, host Spencer Martin said that if you added up the general classification times of Pogačar and Vingegaard from the 2021-24 Tours, less than 10 seconds separated the pair.

Even if it was a minute or two, across four years and 13,667.1 kilometres, that's quite extraordinary, don't you think?

Advances in training, technology, nutrition, and gearing have seen faster times, less bad days (what the French call *jour sans*) and closer racing. But GC hopeful, Classics contender or superlative sprinter, you still need to back the right horse.

A high-stakes gamble gone wrong...

Before the UAE Team Emirates/ Team Visma-Lease a Bike rivalry, there was another who couldn't seem to fail when it came to backing the right Tour contender.

After Cadel Evans' historic victory in 2011, becoming the first Australian and the oldest post-WWII champion, what was then Team Sky won seven out of the next eight editions with four different riders.

Their budget was reportedly in the top-three WorldTour teams, allowing them to court not just the best leaders but the best *domestiques*; much moolah also saw them buy the best equipment, provide their riders the best environment when it came to racing and training, and recruit some of the best sport directors and support staff.

Old-school, dyed in the wool fans loathed them for being so seemingly robotic, so cold-blooded, and indeed, so successful. But from their principal

ABOVE: Pogacar fronts the media at the Giro Dell'emilia in October 2024.

LEFT: Pogacar sporting the World Champions jersey in the Giro Di Lombardia in October 2024.

BELOW: Egan Bernal in the 2024 Tour de France where he placed 29th in the General Classification.

OPPOSITE: Pogacar and Vingegaard go head to head on Stage 11 of the 2024 Tour de France.

Dave Brailsford down to their *soigneurs* they couldn't care less; the objective was to win, and win big.

In October 2018, following Geraint Thomas' Tour victory where they also claimed third overall with four-time winner Chris Froome and the best young rider classification with then 21-year-old Colombian Egan Bernal, they believed they had found their next multiple Tour champion.

Thomas was 32 years of age at the time; Froome was 33. Evans was 34 when he triumphed, so if history was anything to go by, the aforementioned pair had no more than two bonafide attempts left in the bag.

After nine years their title sponsor, Sky, was not renewing. They wanted to keep winning the Tour so, at the time, they decided to do something highly atypical in pro cycling and sign Bernal to a five-year deal. "Egan is part of the next generation at Team Sky, our next big leader for Grand Tours in the years to come… He will only keep on improving," said Brailsford in a team statement.

"PLEASE, TADEJ, TELL US IT'S NOT SO EASY TO WIN LA GRANDE BOUCLE."

In the July that followed, he would become the youngest champion in 110 years to win *Le Tour*, and while a DNF in 2020 (back pain) and non-participant in 2021 (he would ride and win the Giro instead) the team still believed in him – so in early January 2022 along came a four-year extension, keeping him at Team Ineos till 2026…

Two weeks later, in a training ride on his time trial bike in Colombia and reportedly doing more than 50km/h, he crashed into a parked bus and almost lost his life.

ABOVE: Pogacar enjoys his victory in the 2024 Giro Di Lombardia.

Like the comeback of Froome after his crash at the 2019 Critérium du Dauphiné, it's remarkable Bernal has returned to the top level at all, but, like Froome, he is not the rider he was before – and neither is his team.

Still, the Bernal fiasco hasn't put a dampener on long contracts, and it's not just the megastars. Teams are signing what they believe to be the next-big-things to three or four-year deals with large buy-out clauses to dissuade anyone else from poaching their diamonds in the rough when their potential is realised.

Of course, nothing compares to the six-year contract extension for Pogačar. Days before filing my first Spin Cycle of 2025, according to a report in *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, The Pog is guaranteed to earn €8 million (AUD$13M) a year – up from a measly €7M – to 2030, with a whopping €200M buyout clause.

Compare that with football legend Cristiano Ronaldo's projected AUD$335M on-the-field earnings this year and I'd say Tadej's still good value, no? BA

Top 10 Earners in Pro Cycling, 2024

1. **Tadej Pogačar** (UAE Team Emirates) €6 million
2. **Primož Roglič** (Bora-hansgrohe) €4.5 million
3. **Jonas Vingegaard** (Visma-Lease A Bike) €4 million
4. **Mathieu van der Poel** (Alpecin-Deceuninck) €4 million
5. **Wout van Aert** (Visma-Lease A Bike) €3.5 million
6. **Remco Evenepoel** (Soudal-QuickStep) €2.8 million
7. **Tom Pidcock** (Ineos Grenadiers) €2.7 million
8. **Adam Yates** (UAE Team Emirates) €2.7 million
9. **Egan Bernal** (Ineos Grenadiers) €2.5 million
10. **Carlos Rodriguez** (Ineos Grenadiers) €2.5 million

Source: *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, Jan. 2024

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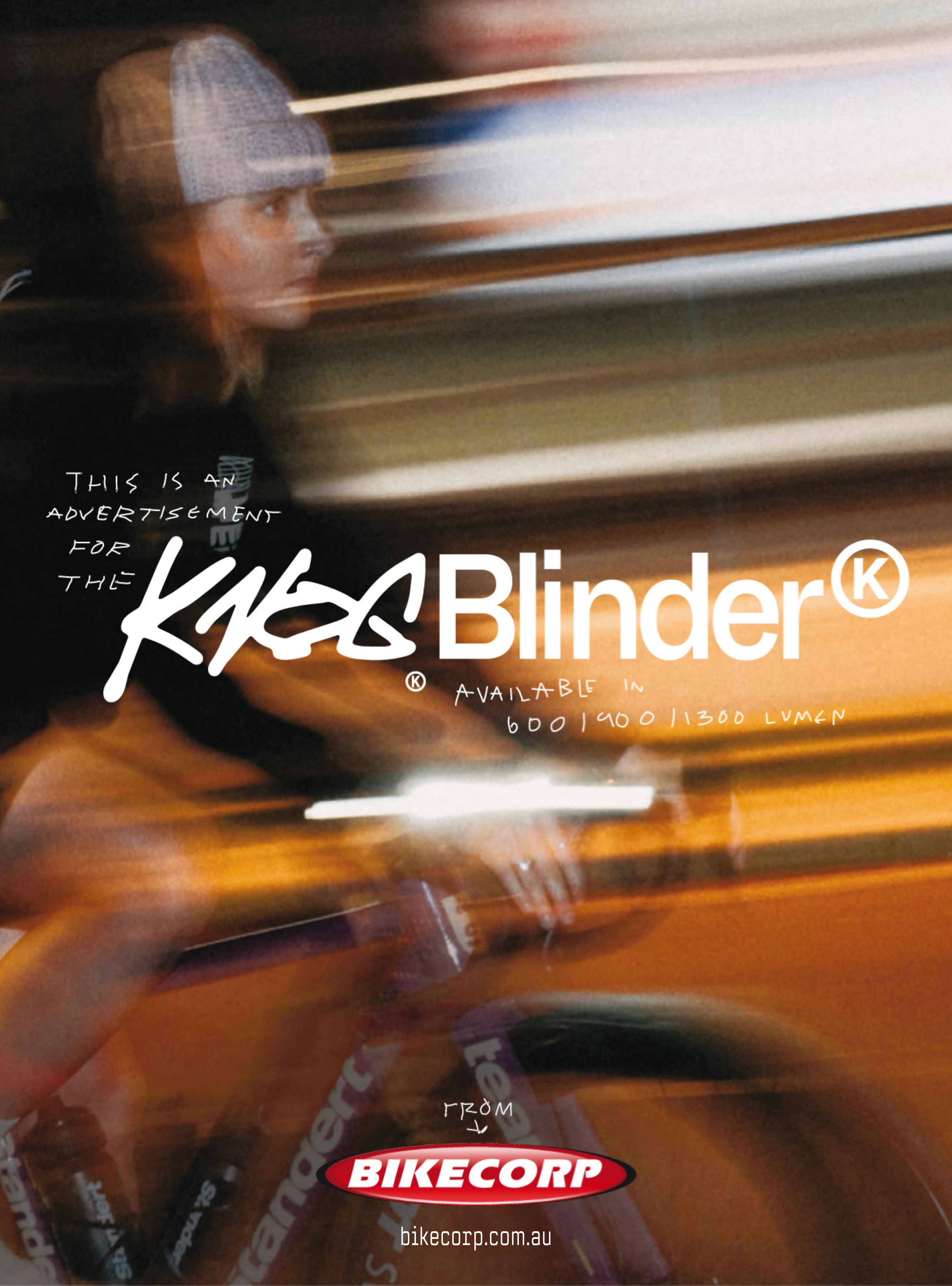
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